Your Guide to Cult Movies, Arthouse Oddities, Drive-In Swill, and Underground Obscurities!

SHOCK CINEMA

NUMBER 9

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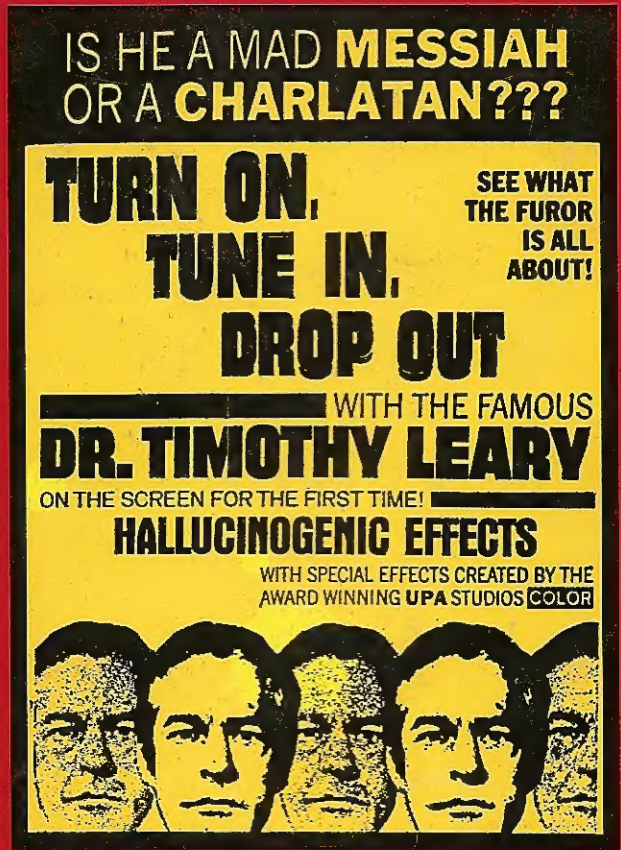

Reviewed in this issue:
Blast of Silence
Black Moon
Godzilla Vs. The Destroyer
Dusty and Sweets McGee
Bonjour Monsieur Lewis
The Orkly Kid
The Subterraneans
The Maltese Bippy
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EDITORIAL RAMBLINGS

First and foremost, thanks for spending your hard-earning cash on this nose-dive into the furthest niches of alternative film & video. With each new issue, SHOCK CINEMA continues to grow, with new distributors, new subscribers, and new people who pick it up at swanky joints like Barnes & Noble and think "What the *fuck* is this rag?" the moment they realize it doesn't have any pretty pictures of Sandra Bullock or John Travolta inside. Of course, if SC ever *had* the cash for a full color, glossy cover, you'd probably see somebody like Dick Miller, William Smith or Cash Flagg gracing it. Don't get me wrong; there's nothing wrong with watching standard Hollywood slop. Everybody does it. Just be sure you pull your head outta their toilet every so often and stick it into our toilet whenever you get a chance.

SUBSCRIPTIONS / BACK ISSUES: Single issues are $5 apiece, with checks/money orders made payable to me, Steve Puchalski. In other words, please do *not* put the name of the mag on your checks, OK? A three-issue subscription is still only $12 (what a bargain! I must be a fucking saint). For overseas readers, single issues are $8 apiece, and alas, there are no subscription rates...As for those illusive back issues? If you missed out on #1 - 4 you're out of luck, but 5 - 8 are still available for only $4 apiece. Get 'em now, or lose out.

Regular readers will undoubtedly notice the increase in the number of ads. My only request: If you order anything, tell them you read about them in SHOCK CINEMA, so *they'll* continue placing ads, and *I'll* be able to crank this mag out on a regular basis. To make up for those ad pages, I've shrunk the type size, so I can cram as much scummy material into the mag as possible...I also hope readers will let me know if any of you are burnt by an SC advertiser, so I can dump 'em in future issues. Personally, I'd rather lose the ad revenue than have some skankbag ripping off loyal readers...A final note to subscribers: Since I'm so busy drinking and watching crappy movies, I don't have time to send out notices when your subscription has run out. Instead, your mailing label contains the final issue in your sub in the top right corner. If there's no number, then you've received a freebie copy (you lucky bastard).

In other news, my first book, **SLIMETIME: A GUIDE TO SLEAZY, MINDLESS, MOVIE ENTERTAINMENT** is finally available. Crammed to the margins with reviews of over 400 gems (and not-so-gems), this compilation of reviews from my first 'zine, **SLIMETIME,** makes the perfect Xmas gift. It slices, it dices, and if I had my way, every copy would come with a six pack of Piels velcro'd to it...Over the past few months, I've been deluged with letters asking me where the book can be bought. First off, bug your local bookstore to stock it. If they refuse, check out the back cover for ordering info...As usual, Anna and I will be at this October's Chiller Theatre Convention; taking a break from the urban cesspool of Manhattan by visiting the slightly-less-urban cesspool of New Jersey. So stop by our table and say hello, check out the **SLIMETIME** book, or hand me a cold beer (because we sure get thirsty sitting behind that table). Of course, even if you can't make it to the wilds of Secaucus, I'd love to hear your comments and suggestions. Our less technology-challenged readers can reach me via e-mail at **ShockCin@aol.com**. Plus, if you get the chance, check out our web site at **http://members.aol.com/shockcin/index.html**, which is filled with back-issue reviews, recommended links and assorted oddities.

Is it just me, or are you finding it more difficult to scrape your ass off the couch and actually go out to a movie theatre? One major reason is the cost, with Manhattan ticket prices raised to a sickening $8.50. What with transportation, popcorn and the bottle of vodka you sneak into the place, that sets you back over twenty bucks for one (usually mediocre) movie. Plus, when it comes to genre fare, the pickings have been slim, with dippy fiascos like THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU, retreads like ESCAPE FROM L.A., or mega-hokum like INDEPENDENCE DAY. One thing's for sure; a decade ago, when I first reviewed the gutter-classic SWITCHBLADE SISTERS, I never could have guessed that a fellow film geek like Tarantino would someday sucker average movie-goers into paying top dollar to see it...Still, much as I love the hilarious idea of SWITCHBLADE SISTERS playing an art-house theatre, there's also something about it that bugs me. Maybe it's the simple fact that "cult movies" are now all the rage, and the people who're suddenly embracing these flicks couldn't have given a rat's ass about them a couple months earlier. I'm even more cynical about the studios, who are obviously only in it because they smell easy cash wafting from a film which has been laying in a vault for a couple decades. Of course, it'd be nice if it did some *real* good, like getting fave director Jack Hill a mega-buck gig---unfortunately, as quickly as studios leap on one bandwagon, they hop onto the next, so I wouldn't bet on it.

DEATH OF THE DEUCE UPDATE: I know this is old news for diehard SleazeFans, but bare with me, because walking down 42nd Street is so depressing nowadays that I'm compelled to bitch about it to readers who can't actually see this tourist shithole for themselves. As you're all aware, that once-sordid strip between 7th and 8th Avenue is GONE. It's clean. It's freshly painted. And instead of deliciously scummy triple-bills catching your eye, there's a five-story Cat in the Hat painted on a building facade (which I'm sure the resident crackheads really got off on..."Mannn, I see a huge fuckin' cat starin' at me...Can I get *more* of this shit?"). At least the walk between 6th and 7th Avenue (just east of Times Square) still has neon blazing for such family venues as Peep-O-Rama and Peep Land. But once you hit that glorious stretch between 7th and 8th—once the home of the Lyric, Liberty, Harris, et cetera—you get a queasiness in your gut, similar to how you feel after eating a Nathan's Soft Shell Crab Sandwich. The entire block looks like a Frank Henenlotter version of THE OMEGA MAN, with the street nearly deserted, the storefronts shuttered, and their steel gates painted with Skittle-like candy colors (in an attempt to convince you that this is a *cheery* wasteland). Now tourists can walk down the street without feeling threatened by dealers, whores, derelicts, and anything else resembling Real Life. Of course, these Urban Renewal Brainiacs didn't realize that by sweeping 42nd clean, there's no reason for *anybody* to walk down that street nowadays (except for **[Continued on Page 39]**

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The deadline for advertising in SC#10 is February 15, 1997. Despite our ever-increasing circulation, ad rates remain:

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FILMFLOTSAM

MILES WOOD; London, England

LES DEUX ORPHELINES VAMPIRES (1996). Adapted from one of Jean Rollin's own books, THE TWO ORPHAN VAMPIRES is the story of two beautiful but blind young orphans (Alexandra Pic and Isabelle Teboul who both look fetchingly younger than their early twenties) who at night regain their ability to see and satiate their thirst for blood. Deliriously shot in super-16 this is one of Rollin's best films, fusing a surrealist's delight in absurdity (the shootings, for example) with a dreamlike visual poetry, in particular in scenes of the orphans clad in white nightgowns roaming through deserted cemeteries at night or disappearing slowly into still waters. The film's depiction of devotion and the power of love reveals a compassion and subtlety that surpasses his earlier THE LIVING DEAD GIRL. The film also achieves a n intense eroticism without the abundance of nudity that tended to cause critics to lump his films in with those of the far less gifted Jess Franco. The camera lingers over such antiquarian objet d'art as a "Fantomas" first edition and a Houdini poster recalling Borowczyk at the height of his powers, and Rollin also reveals an increasing understanding of the power of sound from its use in the tapping of the blind girls' canes as they wander through a graveyard to its suppression during the orphans' attack on another girl.

ZACHARIAH (1970). Opening, like many a Western, with its hero riding through a barren landscape ZACHARIAH then cuts away to... a rock band complete with amplifiers jamming away in the middle of the desert! In classical western tradition the story starts off by establishing how its central character embarked on his "life of the gun"; here, Zach (John Rubinstein) gets his pistol in the mail in a plain brown parcel! Encouraging his best friend Matthew (Don Johnson) a blacksmith, to run away with him, the two soon become gunfighters. Zach makes his first killing when some dumb loudmouthed yokel calls him "a fag" and insults his musical taste (they are watching the rock band Country Joe and the Fish in a saloon at the time!). The pair then decide to hook up with the outlaw musical group, rob a bank, encounter legendary gunman Job Cain (played by renowned jazz drummer Elvin Jones who naturally immediately gets behind a kit and plays a solo!), fall out, and Zach shacks up with a prostitute Belle Star (Pat Quinn—Magenta in THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW) who rates him "the best" of all the gunfighters she's been with, who include, she boasts, Wild Bill Hickcock, Wyatt Earp, Bat Masterton, and Marshall McLuhan! But Zach feels he doesn't "belong" there, and departs, and rolls around in the sand dunes, and stays with an old man in a white beard and dungarees, and becomes at one with the land, and looks after horses, at which point the film's hippie ideals threaten to turn ZACHARIAH into a western take on SIDDHARTHA. ZACHARIAH features some of the most peculiar scenes ever committed to celluloid, including a lovemaking scene between Zach and Belle surrounded by The New York Rock Ensemble depicted in various states of (un)dress, or my personal favorite, the priceless moment when in an attempt to goad Zach into a fight Matthew resorts to... trampling his vegetable garden! Maybe if director George England had somehow "legitimized" his vision with a supporting canon of work or maybe if he'd made a more seriously pretentious film (ZACHARIAH is actually an enjoyably lightweight experience), what was dubbed "The First Electric Western" might have attracted more attention and even amassed a loyal following, rather than be the forgotten product of its age it has become.

FACE THE MUSIC (1953). Old School mystery from Exclusive (Hammer) Films. Alex Nichol is "Brad" Bradley a famous American jazz trumpeter doing a stint at the London Palladium. Tired after a show he decides to skip the first night party and get some kip, but when his taxi decides to avoid the Picadilly Circus traffic and cuts through Soho (!) he hears a woman singing and checks it out. Brad only has to get out his trumpet and blow and he finds himself invited back to her place for spaghetti (!) but after he leaves someone else enters and shoots her. While Brad is not seriously suspected of the murder the police don't mind too much when he decides to play detective and track down the killer. As a whodunnit this Terence Fisher directed thriller isn't too intriguing—though it's interesting the way Brad can use his ear for music to uncover facts the police have missed—and the best parts are undoubtedly the scenes in dingy Soho basements (places Brad says he wouldn't like to take his mother!) and the hep dialogue: "Man I liked that chick Maxine," Nichol drawls as if he's part of Cassavetes' TOO LATE BLUES combo.

COSH BOY (1952). "COSH BOY portrays starkly the development of a young criminal, an enemy of society at 16." So states the prologue of this rare British slice, of what was a popular topic for low-budget American exploiters; that "post war tragedy—the juvenile delinquent." James Kenney plays 'bad boy' Roy Walsh, who spends his time coshing old ladies with the aid of his simple-minded sidekick Alfie. When Alfie's sister, Rene (a very young Joan Collins), appears at the local youth club Roy's hormones get the better of him and he almost cancels the night's mugging, and when she fails to keep an appointment with him he get his gang to beat up her boyfriend, while he forces himself on her... well, sort of, as she seems to come round to liking it! When Roy discovers Rene is pregnant he dumps her, and she throws herself in the river (she survives but loses the baby). Owing money, Roy resorts to stealing his Grandmother's life savings from under the mattress, and makes plans to rob the hall where his mother's Canadian fella, Bob, works. In the process Roy shoots someone, his gang deserts him and he is tracked down by the police who—despite the fact that he's wanted for attempted murder!—first let Bob give him what they no doubt think he needed all along, a good thrashing with his belt. COSH BOY, co-adapted (from a stage play) and directed by Lewis Gilbert, tries to take its subject seriously; Roy's father was killed in the war and his mother hasn't had the strength to control him, and what he clearly needs is a man to bring him up and show him some discipline! But the film's brief running time (barely an hour) doesn't really allow for an in-depth analysis and events rush by far too quickly, and the variable performances and low budget makes the whole enterprise far too artificial. However, Kenney is terrific as the manipulative thug who gets his 'friends' to take all the risks, threatens his mother ("if you bring him home I'll kill him," he swears, when she informs him she's been seeing Bob) and tries to slash Bob (by now his step-father) with a razor, but who naturally turns into a psychotic, whimpering coward when the chips are down, giving the film a sorely-needed dynamic.

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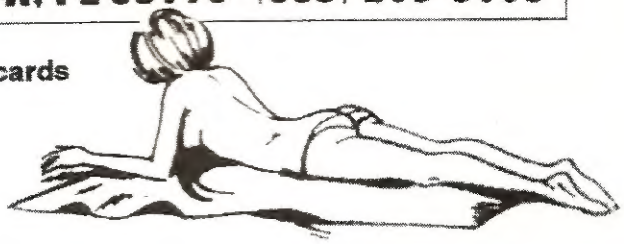

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RED PLANET MARS (1952). Scientist Peter Graves finally gets a reply from Mars thanks to a bit of advice from his young son. But all the news of advanced technology sends America into panic; industries shut down and the entire economy collapses. But just when everything appears lost and the whole planet seem as though they're ready to hang Graves from the nearest tree, a message comes through that echoes the voice of God. Soon the planet is gripped by religious fervor; people go to church and the commies in Russia are overthrown—a man with a long beard takes over! But then Graves gets a knock at the door, and it's the mad Nazi scientist (Herbert Berghof) who invented the transmitter that enabled Graves to contact Mars, or so he thought. In fact, it's all been part of a grand plan for world domination; the initial messages weren't from Mars after all, but from Berghof who's been exiled in Russia. Realizing that Berghof can't be allowed to broadcast the truth, Graves sacrifices himself (and his wife) for the good of the planet, but just as their lab blows up, another message from Mars starts to come through. Ludicrous right-wing Christian dogma, with the scenes that are intended to be moving--a group of Russian peasants are mercilessly gunned down after digging up their religious artifacts—coming across as ridiculously overstated. While most 50's sci-fi flicks are of some value, trying to make a case for this one is a nigh-on impossible mission.

THOU SHALT NOT KILL EXCEPT... (1985). Sgt Stryker (Brian Schulz) and his merry group of Vietnam vets find themselves at war again...this time in backwoods America, when Stryker's girlfriend is kidnapped and her father slain by a group of cult crazies led by Sam Raimi. From a story by Bruce Campbell, Sheldon Lettich and director Josh Becker, the film ignores any political or thematic depth (Oliver Stone this ain't!) in favor of shoddy gore effects, while the touches of humor sit uneasily within the plot and consequently the film fails to pack much of a punch. Worthless apart from Raimi's scene-stealing performance, which makes you wish he'd taken up acting to pay the rent after the first couple of EVIL DEAD films and thus spared everyone from sitting through the likes of THE QUICK AND THE DEAD.

THE SILENT WOMAN (1989). It's hard to know how seriously to take this Euro-thriller directed by Joyce Bunuel (sister-in-law of Luis) and co-scripted by Jean-Claude Carriere, concerning a middle-aged doctor Marianne (Marie-Christine Barrault) who witnesses the aftermath to a murder and identifies the killer as a notorious "Nazi freak" assassin (Pierre Clementi complete with "Jonah Hex" eye make-up and—on the English dubbed track—sounding for all the world like Clint Eastwood) but naturally this doesn't deter her from going to spend a long weekend at an old run-down house in the country. First she hears noises in the night and finds an escapee from the local asylum has been living in the roof, then fascist songs blare from her car radio. When her childhood friend who is now the local policeman visits, they suddenly come under attack from a jack-booted Clementi and his colleagues. The officer is killed, but Clementi allows Marianne to live so she can experience "real fear" before he kills her. The film uses every cliché in the book and then some, and characters do irrational things for no rhyme or reason: Marianne goes for a walk in the woods to pick flowers when she knows a stranger is lurking about, Clementi's female cohort continually complains of being cold—hardly surprising if she chooses to go on a winter killing spree dressed a black cocktail dress!—and just why do Clementi's aides pose as journalists at one point? The events are supposedly meant to serve as some sort of educational passage, but this doesn't really carry much weight. The film was clearly cheaply made and never taxes the viewers patience, and Bunuel's camera lurking in the shadowy cornices of the house and the moody synthesized score do create the occasion frisson, but if the film did have any loftier ideas they got lost in the translation somewhere.

TRISTER KEANE; New York, NY.

ONICE (1973). You'd think this indulgently arty pic would have hit the convention bootleg circuit by now, since Marta Kristen (LOST IN SPACE's blonde sexpot Judy) runs about topless throughout. No such luck, and this early '70s allegory from Morton Heilig remains M.I.A. on home video. Filmed entirely on a beach in Mexico and with NO dialogue, the three loin-clothed actors include Chris Mitchum (Robert's kid) as Creation, Jim Malinda as Destruction and Marta K. as Humanity. No surprise that the plot is as sledgehammer as the characters' names, with Creation proving his powers by shaping a female from sand, and bringing her to life. Of course, that evil ol' Destruction (boo...hisssss) steals this blonde beauty, creates fire, and all hell breaks loose before Creation saves Humanity and wins out. On one hand, you can find seads of puddle-deep subtext in the yarn. On the other, why waste braincells over this moralistic claptrap, when it's more fun to light up a fat one and zonk out to this pretentious romantic-triangle—essentially, two beach boys battling over the to-die-for Kristen (who's no stranger to sandy locales, after playing a mermaid in BEACH BLANKET BINGO). It's also gorgeously lensed, considering its budget ($17,000, with the actors deferring payment in exchange for a percentage of the profit—boy, *there* was a lucrative deal, eh?). Yet despite director-writer-photographer-editor Heilig's very sincere intentions, 100 minutes of this undernourished nonsense will send most viewers scrambling for the closest exit.

EXTREME CLOSE-UP (1973). Now that Michael Crichton is a hot shit player, cranking out best sellers like JURASSIC PARK and scripting studio cliche-fests like TWISTER, this misguided feature proves that even in the early '70s, he was stinking up theaters with his screenplays. Never heard of it? I'm sure Crichton is glad of that fact. Released the same year as Coppola's THE CONVERSATION, both films dealt with the world of surveillance—but while Francis C. s weaved his film into a tapestry of paranoia and loneliness, this piece of tripe is little more than half-baked, softcore sexploitation. Shot in

and around Hollywood, James McMullan plays a TV newsman who becomes a high-tech peeping tom. Armed with all the modern bugging paraphenalia a voyeur needs (leftover from an Invasion of Privacy exposé) he spends the movie spying on women, getting caught, and looking like a total boob. Too pretentious to be fun. Too stupid to be good. Oddly enough, this is one of director Jeannot Szwarc's best efforts, considering the celluloid dreck he's foisted on the world, including SUPERGIRL and SANTA CLAUS: THE MOVIE.

WOMEN IN REVOLT (1972). Andy Warhol's early work is far from audience-friendly, but this later, New York City comedy is crude, caustic and hilarious (thanks in large part to HEAT/FLESH/TRASH auteur Paul Morrissey). Candy Darling, Jackie Curtis and Holly Woodlawn play our trio of heroines (for Warhol neophytes out there, all three are female impersonators), all searching for liberation from male dominated oppression. Candy is a Long Island deb who dumps her incestuous brother and dreams of becoming a movie star; Jackie is a virgin school teacher; and Holly is a nympho fashion model. Of course, they all end up liberated, but worse for wear—miserable, drunk, or saddled with a bastard child. Crammed with cheap sex, camp melodrama, Andy's unsubtle jabs at the Women's Movement, and a trio of unforgettable babes. Even though the dialogue is still improvised (like all of Warhol's most trying pics), the story is kept on course by Morrissey. Plus, where else can you see three women taking revenge on a loud-mouthed hard-hat by beating him up and then giving him an enema? Now that indie pics featuring Warhol are being financed (I SHOT ANDY WARHOL, BASQUIAT), isn't there anybody out there who'll put up some cash to release the *real* thing?

YE LEPRECHAUN GIRLS (1970). I know absolutely nothing about this hilariously-titled romp, except that it played NYC in March of '70. For all I know, this wee bit of grindhouse fodder has nothing at all to do with Leprechauns or Lustful Lassies. But I can always dream, can't I? Considering all the early Times Square sexploitation that Something Weird Video was released in the past few years, I can only hope they'll dredge up this chunk of Buxom Blarney, and give Irish video deviants a reason to stay home on St. Pattie's Day, armed with a bottle of whiskey and a box of Kleenex. What next, DARBY O'GILL AND THE LITTLE PENIS? Or how about HOW WET WAS MY VALLEY? I'm there! And I'm not telling you what I've painted green for the occasion...

GREG WALTERS; Tucson, Arizona.

LE DESTIN EXECRABLE DE GUILLEMETTE BABIN (1947). A French count practices witchcraft and black magic in 16th century France. Based on the works of Maurice Garcon. The director, Guillaume Radot, also made a French werewolf film, LE LOUP DES MALVENEURS, in 1942.

LOVE AFTER DEATH (1969). In this Argentinean production, a man is buried alive by his wife and her doctor lover. The man escapes and plots revenge. He abducts a young girl, and tries to rape her, but discovers he is impotent. When he gets his revenge at the end, the man just vanishes into thin air. Este es el fin!!

ENTER THE DEVIL (1971). Saw this one on TV in the mid-'70s. An anthropologist stumbles across some devil worshippers in the Texas desert. This one is almost as bad as THE DEVIL'S RAIN, but without the name cast, and a gooey ending!! The star of the movie is the desert itself, which looks really unearthly. Originally known as DISCIPLES OF DEATH.

MISS LESLIE'S DOLLS (1972). From the director of the OLGA trilogy, comes the lovely story of a homosexual transvestite who kills and embalms girls at his isolated house. In the end, before he is killed, he transfers his spirit into the body of his last female victim. Is this the last film by Joseph Preito or Mawra?

DR. SEXUAL AND MR. HYDE (1971). Anthony Brzezinski made some amateur Dracula movies in the '50s and then did this hardcore version of the R.L.Stevenson story. An old doctor drinks a potion and becomes a young and sexually voracious predator. Made at the same time as THE ADULT VERSION OF JEKYLL AND HYDE and THE JEKYLL AND HYDE PORTFOLIO. After this film, Brzezinski seems to have disappeared.

THE OVAL PORTRAIT (1972). Based on the Edgar Allan Poe short story, the title picture houses a spirit that possesses women. A Canadian-Argentinean co-production, this film seems to be part of a series of movies based on works by Poe. Annabelle Lee was made at the same time. Announced as MINUTES BEFORE DEATH.

LA DINASTIA DRACULA (1978). Fabian plays Dracula!! Who knows what was on his mind when he agreed to star in this Mexican film. It must've been a long way from HOUND DOG MAN. Directed by Alfredo Crevenna (SANTO VS. THE MARTIAN INVASION).

BORMAN (1966). Most Nazi horror movies are rather schlocky affairs like THEY SAVED HITLER'S BRAIN or ZOMBIE LAKE. Some are rather good like THE FROZEN DEAD. Here's an Italian-French co-production that has Martin Borman surviving the bunker, and heading up his own 4th Reich. It aims to wipe out most of mankind, leaving the Nazi's and their genetically created supermen the only survivors.

CRAZY ADVENTURE [a.k.a. DAIBOKEN] (1966). In the same year, the Japanese got into the game with this film, that has the Führer escaping to the South Pacific!! He plots to destroy the world. With a man in a flying suit. What more could you want!!

ROCKET TO MARS (1977). Here's an obscure one. A softcore sci-fi flick, detailing the amorous adventures of Earthlings flying to Mars. Filmed in 16mm. Supposedly promoted as a midnight movie, but this is highly debatable. This is another where the director is unknown.

DRACULA'S LUSTERNE VAMPIRE (1970). In the same year as GUESS WHAT HAPPENED TO COUNT DRACULA, Des Roberts went to Switzerland to play Dracula again in this rarely seen movie. Some sources think that these two films are the same. From the different cast listings, I think that they are different. Can anybody prove me wrong?

THE MAD LOVE LIFE OF A HOT VAMPIRE (1971). Someone named Jim Parker plays Dracula, in another early hardcore vampire movie. He has a harem of female vampires who get blood for their master by giving male victims a blowjob. Also with a hunchback who helps. In the end, Dracula is destroyed by sunlight. Directed by Ray Dennis Steckler!!

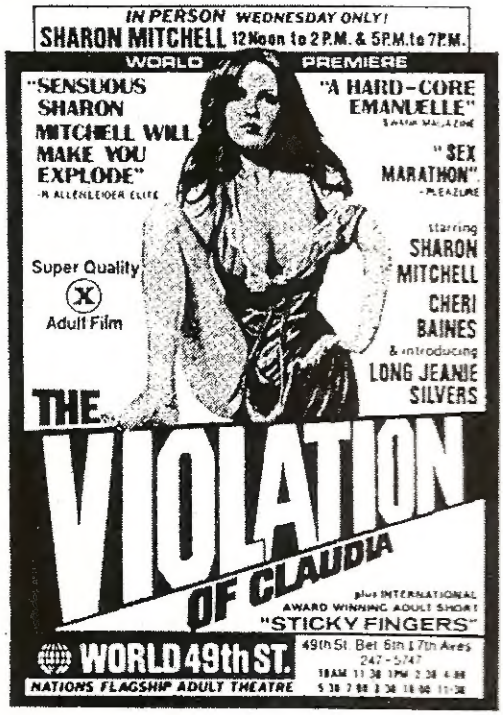
LEE PETERSON; Hoboken, New Jersey.
HOT HONEY (1977) and **THE VIOLATION OF CLAUDIA (1977).**

A couple of years before he was pissing off humorless feminists with his landmark misogynist sleazefest MANIAC, NYC indie director William Lustig (using the nom de porn Billy Bagg) honed his low-budget talents with these XXX (pretty routine) features, which he wrote, produced, directed, and edited.

HOT HONEY features Heather Young as Honey, a virgin who's unsure about going all the way with her boyfriend. While she searches her soul, the boyfriend bangs Robin Byrd (from DEBBIE DOES DALLAS and NYC's long-running public access strip-a-thon, "The Robin Byrd Show"). Honey finally gives it up to her wheelchair-bound older brother (Jamie Gillis) in a threeway with Serena. I guess fucking your little sister has healing powers, because older bro' manages to stand up to deliver the requisite facial cumshot. When Honey goes back home, she pours honey on her boyfriend's dick and licks it off. A happy ending, I guess. With Herschel Savage, a toe-sucking scene, and a theatre marquee showing JAWS 2.

THE VIOLATION OF CLAUDIA boasts Sharon Mitchell's debut XXX appearance (and for all those ugly rumors, no way—Sharon would have to have been pretty young when she got a sex change, if you know what I mean—she can't be much over 18 here). Mitchell plays Claudia, a bored housewife who has a dream about fucking three girls, then wakes up and her husband doesn't want to fuck. Naturally, this leads her to an affair with her tennis instructor (Jamie Gillis again, who plays tennis about as well as I do, which ain't bad, but not exactly pro-level). He fucks her in the locker room, then humiliates her by writing his phone number on the sole of his sweaty sneaker. Along the path of her "sexual awakening," Claudia goes to an orgy, then turns tricks (including a goofy scene with a tubby balding guy with Bozo hair, who covers her with whipped cream and cherries and licks them off. She pours chocolate syrup on his dick and, well, you can figure it out. The blowjob insert features a fairly obvious stunt-dick—the guy's black!! (Guess they wanted to save a couple of bucks on the chocolate syrup). Eventually, she goes home, only to find her husband in bed with—the tennis instructor!! Weren't the '70s wacky?

Lustig later brought us the MANIAC COP series and RELENTLESS.



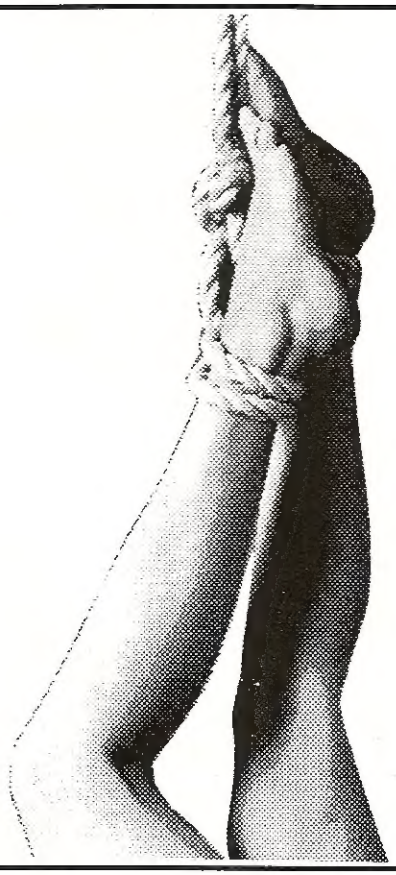
ASA THE CHESSPLAYER; New York City.

Dear Shock Cinema Readers: Your ace reviewer, Asa the Chessplayer, having seen every bit of sleaze available in the good old U.S.A., has turned his attention to foreign shores.

TORTURE HELL features brilliant color, rough S&M and the largest cast of good-looking, tattooed girls ever assembled! The film begins and ends with brutal executions of the bad guys. The primarily Oriental cast all speak French, adding to the exotic effect!

Where else can you see a chastity belt on film? Answer—**ILSA, HAREM KEEPER OF THE OIL SHEIKS**. Shocking, rare, and recommended for even the most jaded viewers. Un peu Français helps.

CAGED WOMEN IN PURGATORY (not to be confused with any similar titles) is a modern production with German spoken and English subtitles. The plot concerns a bunch of framed cuties in an island jail, waiting to be screwed or hunted by bad guys willing to pay. Of course, not all the girls are cooperative—leading to punishments and such classic dialogue as, "getting kicked in the balls isn't my idea of a good time." The film is well produced, with plenty of sex, bondage, and lesbian action. The leading lady is a statuesque European beauty who makes our siliconed babes back home look ridiculous. Good fun for W.I.P. fans. [Above three of these films are available from Video Search of Miami.]



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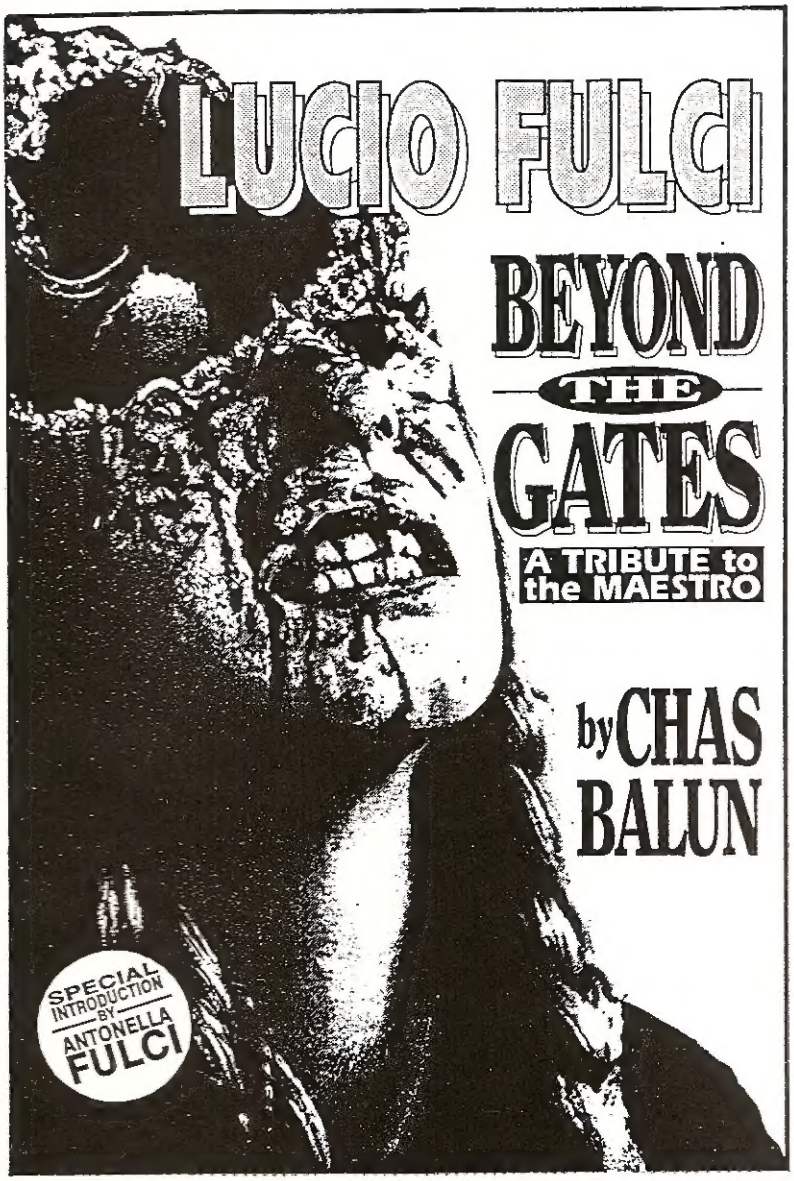

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Shock Cinema's Four Star Favorites

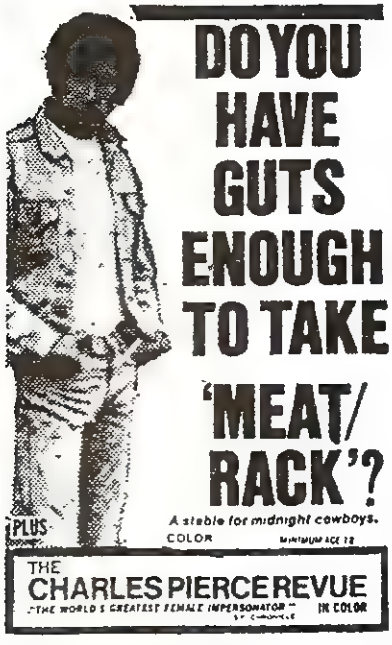
GODMONSTER OF INDIAN FLATS (SWV; 1973). Back in SC#7, I raved about director Fredric Hobbs' magnificently weird 'n' wretched ROSELAND. Here's another of Hobbs' rotgut gems; a nature-gone-wild pic that's overflowing with wrongheaded enthusiasm. And if you thought the giant bunny rabbits of NIGHT OF THE LEPUS were idiotic, wait until you see Hobbs' eight-foot-tall mutant sheep! Stitched together from old, mildewed sheepskins and ugly as hell, it looks like something Jim Henson would've imagined while he was on *really* bad acid. The result of a "chromosomic breakdown in cross-fertilization" (huh?) due to some stinky yellow gas, the creature spends most of the movie sitting in a cage in a local no-tech lab. Meanwhile, the viewer is taken to a nearby Nevada tourist shithole, which provides local color, in addition to Stuart Lancaster (FASTER PUSSYCAT! KILL! KILL!) as the money-grubbing mayor and Erica Gavin (VIXEN) as a "bar girl." The creature breaks free in the final reel, only to kill a few of the asswipe supporting cast, and meander through the desert as if the guy inside the suit had a load in his pants. Like all the great grindhouse auteurs, Hobbs even has his own stable of terrible recurring actors, including E. Kerrigan Prescott playing a half-wit scientist, and Christopher Brooks as a visiting black businessman. Despite the lack of gore 'n' sex, barely a script, and a big, pathetic creature (which Hobbs had the guts to take credit for designing), its unrestrained dementia makes this a nearly-lost, fabulously atrocious treat.

THE NEW YORK RIPPER (1982). Nobody could do it to you like the late great Lucio Fulci, arguably, the king of on-screen carnage. For proof, check out this grue-strewn ditty, when he tried his hand at copying the U.S. slasher pic—all the rage during the '80s—even journeying to NYC for the exteriors. The plot is simple: Beautiful young women are getting slashed to ribbons by a mysterious psychopath who talks like *Donald Duck*. [Confused Pause.] Yes, the maniac sounds just like a duck, whether he's bragging to the cops, terrorizing a nubile victim, or getting big laughs from this piss-drunk viewer whenever he began quacking. Along with the red herrings, convoluted twists and nostalgically scummy locales (sex clubs, graffiti-strewn subways), our heroes are a gruff cop and a young psychologist who try to shake The Ripper out of hiding. Pay no attention to the bad perfs, the creaky plot and the often-uproarious dialogue. Just savor the spectacularly gruesome demises, including a switchblade slaughter on the Staten Island Ferry. Did I forget to mention that our title creep enjoys mutilating his victims' crotches? Then check out the ol' broken-end-of-a-beer-bottle-to-the-stripper's-bare-groin routine. And when he kidnaps the cop's fave prostitute and eviscerates her with a razor blade (the eyeball close-up is a *keeper*), you know you're in the land of the truly ill. It's almost as if Fulci knew this was a lump of shit from Day One, and decided to make the most violent, mean-spirited lump of shit he could. Of course, be sure to avoid the edited U.S. version, and grab an uncut, letterboxed bootleg instead. This unflinching chunk of slice 'n' dice makes FRIDAY THE 13th look like THE MUPPET BABIES.

THE BABY OF MÂCON (Luminous; 1993). You get the impression that Peter Greenaway takes great delight in baffling the public; from his first feature, THE FALLS [SC#2], to his latest, THE PILLOW BOOK, which had a hefty number of mid-film walk-outs during its recent screening at Cannes. In MÂCON's case, it never even made it to U.S. theatres and video. Now that I've seen it, I'm not surprised...A beautiful child, born to an ugly old woman, provides the impetus behind this "miracle play," which spins out of control as the babe becomes a mock-savior at the mercy of the Church. Gorgeously theatrical and ripe with disturbing, widescreen pleasures (courtesy of cinematographer-extraordinaire Sacha Vierney), this will try the patience of more sedate Greenaway fans with its total disregard for good taste and restraint. Yeah! Toe-tapping highlights include a disemboweling, infanticide and a gruesome (but very *artsy*) gang rape—208 times, to be exact (and not one of them is Ron Jeremy). On the other hand, it's too lush and enigmatic to involve anyone *but* a Greenaway fan. Don't be surprised if a couple of the pawns, er, performers look familiar, because that's Julia Ormond playing the child's impostor-mother, and Ralph Fiennes as her inquisitor-priest, just before the pair moved to Tinseltown. The two even have a fully nude sex scene, but within the pic's context, I wouldn't exactly call it erotic. Few modern filmmakers have the genius and audacity to thrust such a sumptuously nasty vision onto the screen. Though difficult to "enjoy," it's impossible to forget.

CAREFUL (Kino; 1992). The films of Canadian director Guy Maddin will never play your average multiplex, but with only three features to his credit (the two others being TALES FROM THE GIMLI HOSPITAL and ARCHANGEL), Maddin has proven himself one of the most visually obsessive directors working today, with a style utterly his own. Of course, in addition to directing, the guy also does the scriptwriting, editing, photography, production design, sound editing, and probably even cleaned the toilets after they wrapped production. Shot and performed like a silent film—even going so far as to tint and age the film stock—the setting of his first color pic is the snowy mountainside village of Tolzbad, where residents never make a noise, due to their fear of avalanches (even going so far as to sever their farm animals' vocal chords). And the only safe place is a naturally-formed "acoustical shelter." Naturally, this type of repressed lifestyle is sure to take its toll on the populace. For example, although Johann (Brent Neale) is engaged to Klara, his Oedipal dreams of Mother has him playing voyeur and concocting a love potion for Ma. Meanwhile, Klara is infatuated with her father, who doesn't notice because Pops is too busy lusting for his *other* daughter. There's also Johann's brothers, Grigorss (Kyle McCulloch) and Franz (who sits, cob-webbed, in the attic), plus the blind ghost of their father. There's a deliberate theatrical veneer to it all, with heavy make-up, wonderfully hokey sets, and some casual brutality (like chopping off one's own fingers, in gooey close-up). It's also filled with truly magical moments, on a budget that would barely pay for lunch on a Tinseltown production.

THE MEATRACK (SWV; 1970). This male hustler flick is a gutter-eyed mix of MIDNIGHT COWBOY and CHASTITY, all captured on an Andy Milligan-sized budget. And although pretty radical for its day, it played Manhattan theatres on-and-off for over a year, and received an actual review in The N.Y. Times! While the film itself names Richard Stockton as director/photographer, all other sources list Michael Thomas, a 21-year-old San Francisco theatre manager, as the auteur. David Calder stars as J.C. (warning: cheesy symbolism alert!), a drifter who's treated like a side of beef. Lonely housewives desire his hard body, every queer hits on him, but his fear of commitment always has him hitting the road, with his thumb out (and his dick not far behind). Making his way to the Big City, he roams Porno Lane, grabs a few one-nighters, and gives the viewer a primer to SF's gay scene; including its bookstores and clubs, how to administer a proper whipping, or where to meet a porky, melancholy transvestite. J.C. isn't your ordinary "pimply-faced, dirty-socked" stud though, and for some chintzy psychological underpinnings we get soft-focus flashbacks to his unhappy childhood and shrewish mom. He also links up with runaway Jean (sex: female), who's just as emotionally lost—only to have their fleeting bliss interrupted by two flamboyant drag queens with a knife, who spin it into a campier direction. Best of all, J.C.'s encounter with slobbering moviegoers in an all-night sleazehouse is shot like a gay NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD. The photography mixes color and b&w; the supporting cast is so ugly, raw and uncinematic they could've been in Warhol's stable; and there's loads of groped male flesh (even a little female is tossed in there to keep bi's amused). A terrific document of a long lost, gloriously-depraved era of underground filmmaking!



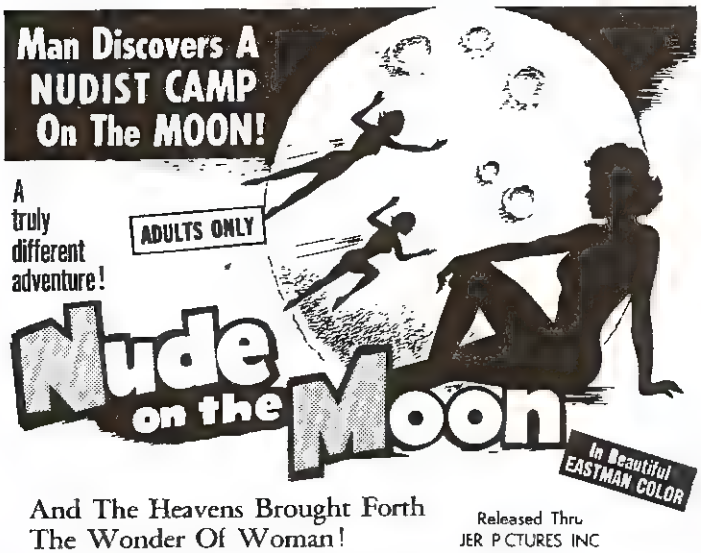
HOLLYWOOD ZAP (1986). The Troma Team has presented many idiotic movies in their time...FAT GUY GOES NUTZOID...IGOR AND THE LUNATICS...But this flick has to take the prize. Not only is it a throwback to that nanosecond when films about video games were the Next Big Thing, but it also sucks in a way that actually makes you feel as if your brain is shrinking inside your skull. Ivan E. Roth stars as a gawky young dweeb named Tucker Downs, who ditches his job as a Mississippi sales clerk to search for his missing pop, and unwillingly picks up a hitchhiker named Nash (Ben Frank), who's got constant bowel problems (complete with wry, pithy dialogue like "I've got a gutful of shit, and I'm gonna burst."). Once in L.A., Tucker gets his ear licked by his Uncle Lucas, and stinky Nash turns out to be a video game hustler in search of an Arcade God named Zap. Meanwhile, only the most subtle, Pinter-esque humor is on display, such as farting, knocking down cripples, racist remarks, and stultifying schtick involving transsexuals, nuns, butt-naked derelicts, and a martial arts midget. With its abrasive veneer, grueling performances and unfathomable storytelling, director/writer David Cohen has side-stepped every aspect of normal filmmaking. It's no wonder this might well be the Ultimate Troma Comedy. I'm scared.

THE INFLATABLE SEX DOLL OF THE WASTELANDS [Koya No Dutchwife] (1967). Any conventional moviegoer will loathe this relentlessly bizarre detective yarn, which proves director Yamatoya Jun is more interested in style than coherence. On the other hand, I loved its twisted sensibilities. A private eye is hired by a wealthy businessman to track down the men who kidnapped his girl and then sent him a film of her black-hooded captors raping her. While the movie's playful disdain for genre conventions and indecipherable internal logic reminded me of later Godard pics, there's also an absurdity which is uniquely its own; like when our detective is asked to demonstrate his marksmanship by hitting a bottle propped again a tree, and instead pulls out both pistols and literally chops down the tree with a hail of bullets. Or making love and the woman suddenly turns into a mannequin (don't you hate it when that happens?). Following hard-boiled tradition, there's plenty of gratuitous female nudity along our dick's trail, and when he roughs up a half naked whore (pulling down her panties and spanking her), she *loves* him for it. Plus, when our hero finally encounters the hooded abusers, he actually seems to enjoy gunning them down; getting one guy's attention by nearly blasting his nose off, before ending up bullet-riddled when his gun finally empties at the wrong moment. Don't forget the wonderfully grating score by acclaimed jazz pianist Yamashita, which caps off this Asian answer to Mike Hammer by way of David Lynch.

TEENAGE GANG DEBS (SWV; 1966). This b&w gang pic is a rancid, no-budget gem, as well as a trip back to a Brooklyn I only wish still existed. Full of tough-talking thugs and big-haired gals, the pic begins with a gang rape and doesn't let up until its lovingly vengeful finale. This ain't no Hollywood pabulum, folks. This is the real thing. Diane Conti stars as Terry, a brunette beauty from Manhattan, who hits Brooklyn with a vengeance. This "restless" doll wants in on the local gang, The Rebels, and quickly snags a gig as the leader's "old lady." From there on, nobody's safe from her black widow charms; turning the members against each other and egging them into macho, turf-hungry behavior (since mindless violence turns her on). Who cares if nobody in the no-name cast can act for beans? For all I know, they were just doing what they did in real life (except with a camera rolling), like hanging out on street corners, in barrooms or in bed, and sounding like utter morons whenever they open their mouths. If you're not too high from its Hubert Selby, Jr.-style grubbiness, director Sande N. Johnsen also fills this fetid blast from the past with gritty locales and touches, including real local bars, real tacky fashions, and *really* bad music. He even tosses in a Queens motorcycle gang named The Aliens for a touch of East Coast biker bravado. A slice of small-time gang grunge, and the tops in outer borough trash.

DARK WATERS (1993). This unsettling slice of EuroHorror is a treat, full of disquieting dreams, grim Crimean locales and twisted kicks. Louise Salter stars as Elizabeth, a beautiful young woman who learns that her recently-deceased father had been secretly funding an island convent. She travels there to check out the place and visit a cloistered girlfriend (who, unbeknownst to her, has been savagely murdered), only to discover that the place is the home of a secret sect of self-flagellating nuns who burn crosses in the caves under the convent. Most important, they're trying to resurrect "The Beast" by piecing together a broken amulet. Gorgeously lensed and creepy as hell, this boasts an avalanche of religious imagery and production design that's heavy on the candles and crucifixes. Although far from a balls-out splatter-fest, director Mariano Baino dishes out a couple spectacularly bloodthirsty sequences, plus sinister killer nuns which are sure to put a smile on the face of any lapsed Catholic (especially when Elizabeth bashes a nun's skull against

the floor until her brain seeps out). Unlike most modern horror pics, which are all pay-off and little else, the slow and ominous build-up is as intriguing as the latex-drenched, supernatural finale. I only hope this delirious tale puts Baino on the map, so we can continue to revel in his magnificently sicko imagination.

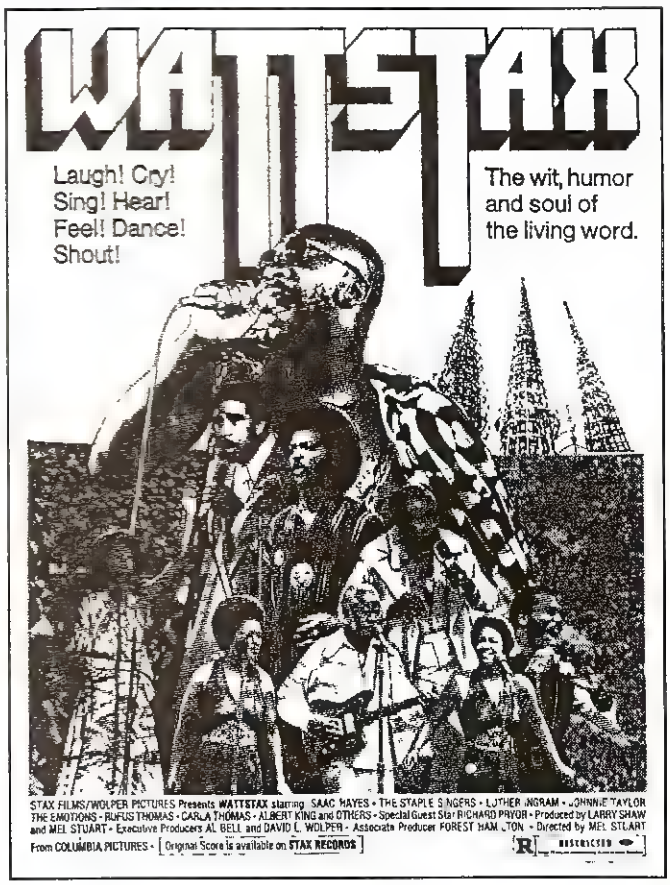


NUDE ON THE MOON (SWV; 1963). In the early sixties, when sex-starved moviegoers wanted a cheap thrill, they had to settle for topless-only nudist camp pics. This hilarious grindhouse idiocy from Doris Wishman is the silliest of these once-risqué, now-archaic tit-o-ramas. Lensed under the pseudonym Anthony Brooks and kicking off with the groanable title ballad "Moon Doll", we meet hot-shot rocket scientist Jeff, who uses his inheritance to fly on a secret mission to the moon, accompanied by his staid, professorly mentor. They simply climb into their NASA-like rocketship and take off whenever they feel like it. Oddly enough, the moon resembles a nudist theme park, complete with a primitive, Flintstones-style set, where all the dames hang out (literally). And though these zaftig Moon Maidens don't have access to clothes, they certainly know a thing or two about cellulite. Besides discovering chunks of gold scattered about like dog poop, the pair takes photos of the space-tarts' typical daily routine, which include lounging in the sun and some way-too-modern dance. Then, when they meet the Queen (and her shoveled-on make-up), she's a dead ringer for their Earth secretary! The pic takes a half-hour until the first sight of flesh, but it's worth it simply to revel in Doris' cost-cutting technique. The spacesuits look like those boxed Halloween costumes you used to buy when you were a kid, while the Moon People wear only swimsuit bottoms and pipe-cleaner antennae. Plus, making them telepathic obviously saved on their sync-sound costs. The Wishman magic strikes again, and one-third of a century later, this sci-fi boob-fest still astounds.

GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, ALICE COOPER (1974). This invaluable, 80-minute concert film gives us Alice Cooper during his Billion Dollar Babies Tour. And if you're too young to realize that Cooper was once a kickass performer, this flick will set you straight; capturing Alice before he forgot he was a musician, because he was too busy being a celebrity (which, to be honest, probably paid better). Before tossing us into Cooper's live show, director Joe Gannon gives us a HEAD-like prologue that begins like an old Movietone newsreel, then slyly cobbles together clips from old movies (from Shirley Temple to REEFER MADNESS), Watergate Hearings footage and an interview with Cooper. He even gets decked out in a white tux and sings "The Lady is a Tramp"---that is, until he gets pissed off and destroys the set with a handy bulldozer. From there on in, it's prime Alice in the midst of his "Rock-Cabaret," flaunting his incredible fashion (non)sense in platform hip-boots and capturing for posterity such indelible tunes as "Under My Wheels," "Eighteen," "Sick Things," "Dead Babies," and "No More, Mr. Nice Guy." The final half-hour goes totally for broke, with performance-art dentistry during "Unfinished Sweet" (complete with a dancing tooth and giant toothbrush), while for "I Love The Dead" Alice shoves his head into a full-sized guillotine. There's a top-hatted encore of "School's Out," and (best of all) he beats the crap out of a fake-Nixon during the "Star Spangled Banner" finale. This is fierce, hilarious and the very definition of that era. A trough of cold (cheap) beer is recommended, but not necessarily required.

THE LAS VEGAS TAPES (1987). I'm a sucker for anything about Las Vegas, and this 27 minute documentary by Scott Jacobs is at the top of the pack. Filmed in 1976, it's a smart, lovingly assembled portrait of a downtown which is, nowadays, no more (sniff sniff). Filmed long before the mega-casinos took reign over the Strip, this is an especially important document now that the once-glorious main drag of Fremont Street has recently been covered over and turned into a mall. From its opening montage and Freddie Fender's "Wasted Days and Wasted Nights," this captures the *real* Vegas, with Jacobs even getting his camera onto the floor of the casinos. Avoiding the more upscale Strip, Jacobs focuses his b&w footage on the misfits who hang around downtown Las Vegas and the human flotsam which is drawn to this Mecca of Money. Jacobs interviews the seediest collection of characters you'll ever see outside of a Bukowski novel, including low-rent slot players; Toye, a typical topless dancer (a far cry from the showgirls the tourist bureau feeds us); a crippled panhandler; Angel, a zonked-out whore; and lots of folks who are just plain nuts. There's even a small army of very confused Japanese tourists (proving some things never change). Of course, everybody is more than happy to expound on their personal theories behind The City That Never Sleeps. Fueled by hilarious seediness and hidden misery, this makes LEAVING LAS VEGAS look more like VIVA LAS VEGAS.

WATTSTAX (1973). Why the hell hasn't this amazing concert pic ever been released on home video? Seven years after the Watts riots, the Los Angeles Coliseum filled with 100,000 brothers and sisters, to commemorate the event with six hours of peace, love and *soul*. This flick captures it all. Jesse Jackson kicks it off with a bad-ass 'fro, ill-advised rhymes ("We have shifted from bed bugs and dog ticks...To community control and politics"), then leads the entire audience in "I Am Somebody." Of course, modern viewers will revel in the glorious MACK-era fashions, which would nowadays bring top dollar in the East Village. Pastel hot pants, two-foot wide afros, porkchop sideburns, dashikis, the works. Then there's the music (the diciest aspect of the pic), which includes The Staple Singers with "Respect Yourself"; The Bar-Kays (with their jaw-dropping albino afro) doing "Son of Shaft"; Rufus Thomas singing "Funky Chicken", while the audience pours onto the football field; and Isaac Hayes with "God is On Our Side" (since the pricks at MGM wouldn't let him use "The Theme from Shaft"). Mel Stuart (who also directed WILLY WONKA AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY!) gives everyone the spotlight, but also clips 'em short if they drag, while mixing documentary-footage with



the music. Between tunes, Richard Pryor rips loose with some early *That Nigger's Crazy*-style monologues, long before hitting a crossover crowd with that dickless honky, Gene Wilder. We also listen to Pryor rapping about life, love and Whitey with his pals (including a seemingly-fucked-up Ted Lange, long before signing onto the lily-white LOVE BOAT as bartender Isaac). Most important, this film gives you a real sense of the time and the community, with enough heart to go beyond its now-kitschy, surface pleasures. It's a musical milestone in cinematic Black Pride.

LADY TERMINATOR (1989). Just another TERMINATOR rip-off? Absolutely, but this ultra-violent, Indonesian rotgut is right up there with BLOOD FREAK in terms of crude, unfathomable anti-gems. In an 1880's prologue, the insatiable South Sea Queen eats men for lunch; but when a male finally gets the best of her, she vows revenge on his great-grand kid. A century later, a female anthropologist pays no attention to the warnings from a crotchety old librarian, goes deep sea diving, ends up spread-legged on a giant bed, and has a magic eel dive into her vagina. From that moment on, she's transformed into a mindless, topless, frizzy-haired juggernaut who's possessed by the vengeful queen—while that pesky eel inside her bites the cock off anyone who has sex with her. But wait, there's more! Meet Erica, a famous pop singer, who becomes our She-Assassin's main target, with a good guy Anglo cop as her guardian. Did I forget to mention our Terminatette's shabby CARRIE-like powers, which allow her to destroy apartments with her mind? Or how she blasts away at innocent shoppers at the mall (proving she isn't all bad, after all)? Or how cops can pump hundreds of bullets into her, with little effect (hey, it's *magic*, OK?). As for her bad attitude, I'd be irritable too, if I had a live eel crammed up my privates. Of course, director Jalil Jackson (a God) rips off a few Cameron sequences, like a one (wo)man massacre of a police station. Released unrated in the U.S., the only time the bloodshed and half-baked mysticism ebbs is to squeeze in a laughable sex scene. Let's hear it for non-stop, badly-dubbed, lurid, human carnage!

BLOODY KIDS (1979). With a title like this, you'd probably except Troma's name to be attached. Instead, this tough-hearted street drama was cranked out by Brit director Stephen Frears, years before becoming the critics' darling with THE HIT and PRICK UP YOUR EARS (and long before selling out with studio abortions like HERO and MARY REILLY). Lensed for British TV, with no recognizable actors and a thoroughly dingy veneer, it follows a pair of 11-year-old boys, Mike and Leo (Peter Clark and Richard Thomas). They're bullied by older bastards at school, steal a cop's hat from the scene of an auto accident, but primarily, plan a prank that consists of a fake knifing. Of course, it all goes haywire, with Leo in the hospital and Mike on the run from the inept police. But unlike U.S. made-for-cathode-consumption pics, which would be quick to condemn the kid, Mike ends up having a cool (albeit nervous) Saturday night, especially while running wild with an older social misfit. They nick a car for a joyride, visit a two-bit disco (complete with those ever-fashionable tube tops), rip off a meal at a Chinese restaurant, and hang with various, straggling punk teens. And it's all captured in neon-encrusted colors by Chris Menges. Similar in tone to Mike Leigh's work (particularly MEANTIME and NAKED), this rambly but compelling glimpse into urban childhood has that irrefutable stink of reality.

HOW TO GET REVENGE (1988). This dopey, hour-long video disappeared so quickly that nowadays, it's almost a legend. Hosted by everyone's favorite Roller Booger, Linda Blair, this no-budget educational tape instructs us in the joys of "trashing your enemies." It opens with Linda (standing before a pasteboard set) perusing the Bible, quoting "vengeance is mine," then introducing us to a bevy of so-called experts who show us how to make someone else feel "the same humiliation...the same mental anguish that they inflicted on you." Of course, most of these experts are total asses, and director/writer Bob Logan (MEATBALLS 4) gives us cheesy re-enactments of their schemes. Starting with the hoary old 'flaming dogshit on the front porch' routine, to today's more sophisticated methods of revenge; like sending fake death certificates to the IRS; using hotel stationary to make their wife suspicious that hubbie is having an affair; sending a guy's photo into a gay magazine; fucking up a car by replacing their windshield cleaner with cooking oil; or pouring salmon eggs into their air conditioner. There's plenty more too—some are ridiculous, some are amusing, and all of them are cheap and mean-spirited. Strangely enough, Blair seems to be enjoying this two-bit gig. It probably took her an afternoon to film her scenes, and her fake chuckling at their idiotic gags is her finest acting since CHAINED HEAT. It's the ultimate in dumb-assed info-mercials!

DANCING OUTLAW (1991). White Trash addicts rejoice! This incredible half-hour documentary gives us an up-close and way-too-personal portrait of Boone County, West Virginia's most infamous resident, Jesco White, a tap dancing hick who's the self-proclaimed last of the "Mountain Dancers." In this CITIZEN KANE of backwoods bonehead pics, we hang with Jesco (a Pa Kettle for the 21st century), his mother, and his hideous wife, the ever-bickering Norma Jean (as Jesco touchingly tells his better half: "I'd blow your brains plum into that river bank o'er there, just to get you to quit arguing!"). This feels like Errol Morris crossed with John Waters, and wait until you get a gander at the fabulous locales, including run-down trailers, pick-up trucks and trash-pocked roadsides. Director Jacob Young should be commended for capturing this rambling hayseed for posterity, and in today's jaded world, it's rare to discover a film so in tune with its hayseed subjects. We're also privy to some of their downhome shenanigans, plus tales of Jesco sniffing lighter fluid, the murder of his dad, a visit to his Elvis Room, and Jesco's vision of an angel with a rattlesnake's head (maybe sniffing that lighter fluid wasn't such a bright idea after all, eh?). And when things become too boring, they get shit-faced and spin their pick-ups in the mud. This is sure to put a smile on your face. And personally, after living in an urban cesspool like NYC for so long, I was glad to know that there are people this blissfully stupid still wedged into the niches of rural America.

BRAIN DEAD (Concorde; 1990). I've always had a fondness for this tripped-out combo of sci-fi and black comedy which, coincidentally, stars the dynamic duo of this summer's blockbusters, Bill Pullman and Bill Paxton. Based on a dusty script by TWILIGHT ZONE war-horse Charles Beaumont and cannily directed by Adam Simon (CARNOSAUR), this pic is totally disorienting and damned proud of it! The type of reality-bending silliness that'll leave the slow-witted (or perpetually stoned) viewers in a haze. Pullman stars as Dr. Martin, a quirky science-guy whose forte is brains (hence his wall of bell-jarred gray matter). At the request of old school chum Paxton (at his Greasy Sleazeball best), Pullman visits the Lakeside Mental Institute to check out their star patient, and discovers badly-aging Bud Cort (HAROLD AND MAUDE) as an endearingly cracked genius who's got a batch of Company secrets in his skull. It's Pullman's job to "resculpt" this kook's head and retrieve the info. But as Cort's reality is transformed, so is Pullman's, who finds his entire world collapsing (or even worse, meshing with Cort's paranoid, blood-stained past)—one moment thinking he's trapped in a mental hospital, and the next, convinced he's an accountant at a mattress factory. Despite its fly-by-night budget, this tries to approximate a dream state within the framework of a movie. Happily, it has the cinematic chutzpah to pull it off. Funny, disorienting and very clever, this is a perception-unraveling journey into heady delusion.

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FILM REVIEWS

TURN ON, TUNE IN, DROP OUT (1967).

First off, I was definitely in the incorrect frame of mind to watch this legendary Timothy Leary performance film, which first brought his message to the silver (and to most of his tripped-out fans, throbbing and dripping) screen. To prepare, you *should* smoke a little weed, or better yet, drop a tab. Instead, I saw an afternoon showing, on a blazing hot day, with a raging hangover. Oops. And though previous descriptions say it's nearly feature length, the print screened by NYC's Film Forum clocked in at barely an hour. So that's what I'm going on, until somebody tells me otherwise.

Filmed at the Village Theatre in Manhattan's East Village, this Henry G. Saperstein production gives us Leary's psychic celebration in all its pretentious glory. It also includes a cheesy disclaimer which promises it's not promoting the use of LSD. Yeah, right. That's coming from a movie that tells us we need to "go out of our minds, to come to our senses."

Leary warns us, "This is not an entertainment. It is our public religious service." Actually, it's more like one long, on-stage monologue which will give acid nay sayers the urge to take a long piss on the screen. Welcome to the Wit and Wisdom of Timothy Leary, as he sits cross-legged, surrounded by candles, while musicians provide mood-inducing guitar, sitar, venna, and tabla. We get a prayer, a history of religious drug use, and a tour "down the long protein ladder of memory." Meanwhile, on the center screen, psychedelic visuals are projected, to enhance the experience, and (as Leary puts it in his '83 bio, FLASHBACKS) "to activate the archetype circuits of the brain." Of course, in order to "Turn on" you'll need a sacrament, and "today our sacrament is a chemical," thanks to the wonders of modern chemistry. Obviously,this "Sacrament" has been hard at work on Leary's own head.

This is Leary in his prime, and instead of the usual sound bites of his philosophy, here we get one long, uninterrupted dose. Acting as a guide on our "voyage of discovery," he certainly needs to lighten up a little, especially when throwing out his loopier notions. Like how kids don't care about fancy cars anymore—instead, it's one s "vibrations." Plus a discussion of the "menopausal mind," and the story of Ralph ("who is us"), searching for meaning on the Lower East Side. Unfortunately, the filmmakers never cut to the audience, because I would've loved to have seen just how tripped out they looked.

He's a Buddha. He's a Mutant. He's a charismatic Shaman, with his groovy rap slowly wearing at your defenses. It's too bad that director Robin Clark didn't do more to keep us visually amused, instead of his unimaginative, 3-camera shoot. Still, this is a fantastic artifact, as well as the flip-side of the cheesy, anti-drug, "educational" films which I suffered through in junior high.

THE NAME OF THE GAME IS KILL! (1968).

Only months before premiering as HAWAII 5-O's Steve McGarrett, Jack Lord starred in this bizarre romp, featuring a family of psycho dames and plenty of amazing photography courtesy of William (a.k.a. Vilmos) Zsigmond. In an odd bit of casting, Lords plays a Hungarian drifter named Symcha Lipa, who's out walking the sun-beaten backroads of Arizona, with only a duffel bag and a terrible foreign accent. And what the guy lacks in charisma, he make up for in nice hair. He's soon picked up by Susan Strasberg (straight from hippie-dippy outings like THE TRIP and PSYCH-OUT), whose mom and two sisters run a gas station in the middle of the desert.

He accepts Strasberg's kind offer to crash overnight at their dusty home, never realizing what a hilariously crackpot batch of dames he's getting involved with (the fact that the youngest sis, Nan, was expelled from school for killing a cat and tossing a boy down a flight of stairs is a clue). While Mickey (Strasberg) flirts ad nauseam with Lord, older sis (Collin Wilcox) is a prude, and the youngest (sexy Tisha Sterling) is a psycho-minx. As for Mom? Well, Mom (T.C.Jones) is just plain creepy.

Lord realizes that something is suspicious when a rattler pops up in his bedroom, but when he tries to sneak off, he's smacked by a mysterious car, knocked unconscious (cut to: trippy visuals), and decides to shake some answers out of these weirdos. Of course, when their family trauma is discussed, everybody gives Lord a different story about what happened to Father. Was it murder? Was it suicide? Of course, if you're a fan of The Monkees' movie HEAD, you'll figure out the film's punchline in the first reel.

Despite all this twisted potential, Gunnar Hellstrom's direction is too slow-paced. In addition, Strasberg is as bland as always. Gosh, you'd almost think she got all of her roles because she was the daughter of Method Acting guru Lee Strasberg, and not from her inherent (dis)ability. At least Ms. Sterling is suitably hot, especially when dancing to The Electric Prunes' "Shadows" on the radio. plus it's fun to watch Lord in this type of screwy, before-stardom scenario. Pocked with hysterical tidbits, this is a diverting dysfunction-fest.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THE FABULOUS STAINS (VSoM; 1982).

I first caught this prophetic girl-group pic over a decade ago, on USA's Night Flight. After all this time, I'm glad to finally snag an uncut copy of this fave (originally shot under the title ALL WASHED UP), which feels like a mix of DESPERATE TEENAGE LOVEDOLLS and THIS IS SPINAL TAP (of course, both of these classics were actually filmed *after* this was in the can). Directed by ROCKY HORROR-producer Lou Adler, this film sunk without a booking, had a nominal release years after it was made (i.e. a one-day-only gig at L.A.'s Summer Music Film Fest), and now seems like the antecedent of every modern riot grrl band.

16-year-old Diane Lane rips loose as Corrine "Third Degree" Burns, a pissed-off teen from a blue collar Pennsylvania cesspool who jumpstarts her own all-gal punk band called The Stains, with the help of her sis (Marin Kanter) and 15-year-old Laura Dern. On their trip to fame and misfortune, the trio meets Fee Waybill (of The Tubes), who's terrific as a washed-up rocker so dimwitted he makes David St. Hubbins look like Stephen Hawking. Since his once-successful band The Metal Corpses is now playing shitty clubs to a handful of bored locals, he hires the musically-challenged Stains (who barely know three chords) and Lane ditches bleach blonde aunt Christine Lahti in a blink.

So there they are; three runaway, teenaged girls on the road in a 3rd rate tour bus.

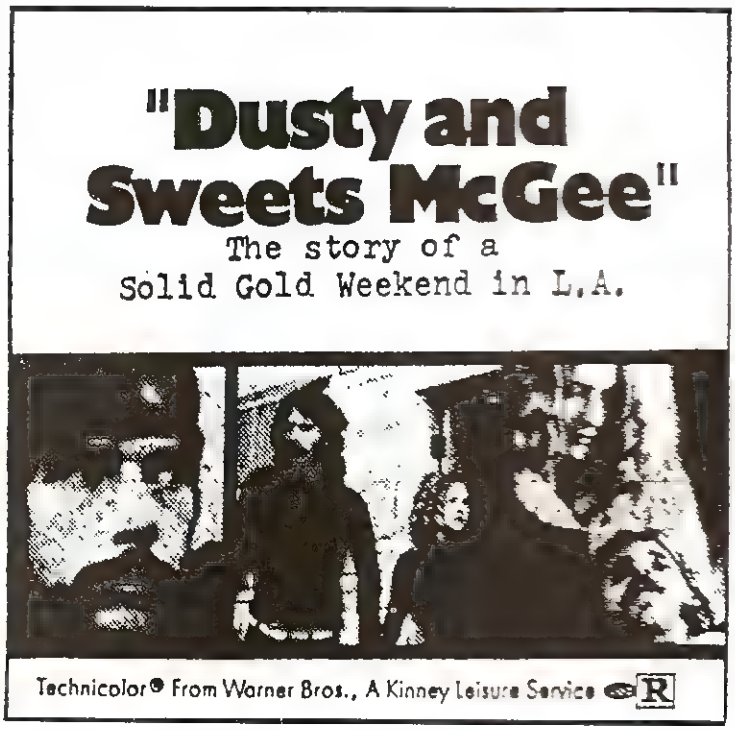
Best of all, the (easily excitable) openers are The Looters, a UK band consisting of Paul Cook and Steve Jones from The Sex Pistols, bassist Paul Simonon from The Clash, and Ray Winstone (the lead Rocker from QUADROPHENIA) on vocals. Things heat up on their first gig, when Lane steps on-stage with a see-thru top and a bleached "skunk" hairdo, and soon The Stains are a cult phenomenon, with femme mallrats soon emulating Lane's dye job, diaphanous attire and "I don't put out" motto.

Though slowed by some vapid melodrama, this is tons of silly, proto-feminist fun, as they tour local malls, filled to capacity with legions of lemming-like girls. Happily, the movie also shows how fast fans can turn ugly when they realize they've been ripped off. Musically, the only halfway decent tune, "The Professionals" (by Cook and Jones) is played to death, while nothing from The Stains is remotely listenable outside of the context of this movie.

This pic has authenticity to spare, especially when it comes to the shitty little towns bands are forced to play. I only wish Lane was a better actress, because although her shower scene with Winstone accomplishes its desired goal, her anti-social speeches are limp. Slick but surprisingly savvy, it knows the territory, pisses on it with a sharp sense of humor, and captures the period better than most studio pics of that era.

DUSTY AND SWEETS McGEE (1971).

Floyd Mutrux is best known for directing nostalgic pics like ALOHA BOBBY AND ROSE and AMERICAN HOT WAX. This, his first feature, gives us Mutrux at his very best; capturing a streetwise reality and humor that would always keep him on the fringes of big studio success. Utilizing a multi-character, overlapping structure (which would later become fashionable in AMERICAN GRAFFITI and NASHVILLE), we're dropped into the middle of a pseudo-documentary Los Angeles Solid Gold Weekend, and a motley assortment of heroin addicts and their dealers. If the leads look a little strung out, that's because all the junkies are playing themselves (first names only), while the rest of the characters are portrayed by actors (you mean their pushers didn't want to be seen on camera?)



There's a male hustler; two guys buying a car stereo; and a teenaged couple who are barely able to crawl out of their bed for the entire movie. By far, the most effective sequences involve an older addict named Tip, who refers to himself as an "every-day dope fiend," fondly recalls his prison experiences (while interviewed in front of the LA county slammer), and makes his bread by ripping off stores. First, his male partner walks in, and while faking an epileptic seizure, Tip loads up a bag with cigs and saunters out, only to reunite later on and shoot up in a laundromat toilet. Obviously, Gus Van Sant was a fan of this pic when he made DRUGSTORE COWBOY.

This is a glassy-eyed time capsule that sucks you in from its first frames, and is at its best when avoiding the more clichéd vignettes (like following the money-men behind the dope), and focusing on the characters' simple(minded) lifestyle, like how they pass off their dope in public phone booths. All of this grittiness is well captured by cinematographers William Fraker (who also plays one of the upper-echelon suppliers) and Laszlo Kovacs. Plus, there's a wall-to-wall soundtrack which includes Nilsson, Del Shannon, Van Morrison, and an appearance by Blues Image singing "Mystery Ship."

This is far from total Doom 'N' Gloom Cinema though, because a lot of humor sneaks in (usually at the expense of the leads), such as when a girl explains how she once shot up, got so high that she forgot she'd just shot up, did it again, and O.D.'ed. Oops. Though never preachy, it's clear these junkies are far from Mensa candidates and are going absolutely nowhere (since they're usually too preoccupied with searching for a fresh vein). This flick is sure to give any aging addicts a nostalgic twinge for the good ol' days of sharing needles and nodding off at the most inappropriate moments.

MR. FREEDOM (1968).

Some ultra-bizarre pics simply fall through the cracks after their first, disastrous release and are rarely heard from again. Here's a prime example. A ridiculous, gloriously misguided political satire in the guise of a comic book, superhero tale. The brainiac behind this French-made, agitprop rollercoaster ride is director/writer/designer William Klein, an American expatriate turned fashion photographer, who also made FAR FROM VIETNAM, ELDRIDGE CLEAVER, and appeared in Chris Marker's LA JETEE. Kitschy as hell and filled with pseudo-futuristic trappings, it's also a field day for hardcore U.S. bashing. Yet even when it sucks (and that's often), it sucks in such a freaky, wrongheaded way that I fell in love with it.

The first few minutes are astounding. As rioting takes place in the streets, a U.S. sheriff (John Abbey) enters his secret closet (not-so-subtly hidden behind a wall-sized American flag) and becomes the ultra-patriotic crimefighter Mr. Freedom. In truth, he looks more like a red, white and blue WWF reject, complete with football shoulder pads and a catcher's mask. He then crashes through an innocent black family's window, blasts away with his guns, stands on their dining room table, and sings his theme song ("We'll always beat 'em, / With star-spangled freedom."). Alright!

This 'hero' is also a total lemming, of course, spouting his militaristic rhetoric ("Might is Right. And Right is Freedom.") and following the imperialistic orders of *Doctor* Freedom, the M-style administrator at Freedom Inc. (played by Donald Pleasance, who only appears on a TV screen). He's a Real American, all right. A cross between Superman, Ronald Reagan and your average KKK member, with hilariously jingoistic rants about left-wing liberals, pacifists, and "red-assed, black-assed, Jew-assed farts who can't even spell America." His latest assignment is to stop Red China Man and his Commie pals from taking over the French (or as Pleasance refers to them, "mixed-up, sniveling crybabies who haven't stood on their two feet since Napoleon."). He also has to avenge the death of his buddy, *Capitaine Formidable*. And if the French don't want Mr. Freedom, he'll *force* them to, even if he has to kill them all in the process.

Klein comes up with some radical compositions, while his colorful costumes are Pop Art crossed with Rummage Sale. Unfortunately, Klein's sawed-off-shotgun approach to his script quickly deteriorates into a mess of increasingly strange episodes. There's a French pep rally for Mr. Freedom, scantily clad ladies fawning all over him, a smoke-breathing Chinese dragon balloon, and even a Special Guest Appearance by Jesus Christ! The cast is also peppered with Euro-arthouse faces, including Delphine Seyrig as Marie, a pro-democracy French babe who takes a liking to Freedom's physique; Philippe Noiret in an inflated body suit as Moujik-Man; and Yves Montand pops up for a handful of split-second cameos as *Formidable*. Alternately naive, crude, pretentious, and hilarious, this is a one-of-a-kind oddity.

THE MALTESE BIPPY (1969).

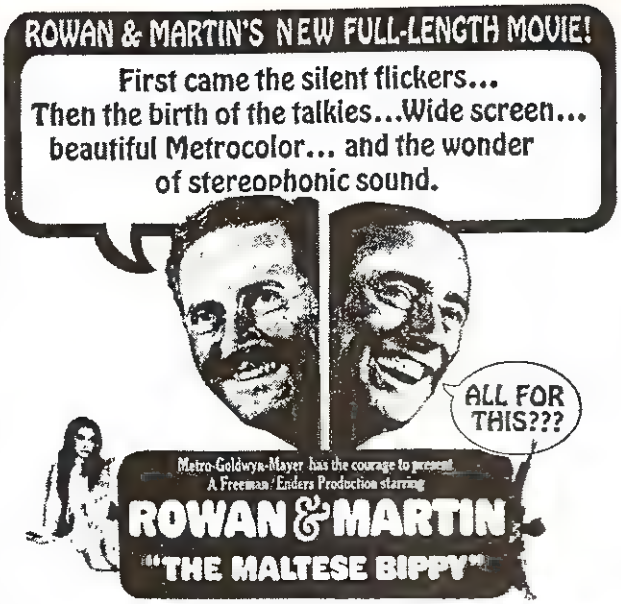
One of my fondest, childhood TV memories was watching Rowan and Martin's LAUGH-IN every Monday night, and then talking about it the next day, during 4th grade recess. I *loved* that show. Unfortunately, watching it twenty years later, I discovered just how lame and laugh-barren it actually was. Still, the masochist inside me jumped at the chance to check out Rowan & Martin's feature debut, which was spewed out by MGM in the wake of their show's mega-success. No surprise, it went directly into the toilet, both financially and critically.

Nowadays, it comes off like a misguided, counterculture version of a Hope & Crosby movie (coincidentally, this pic's director, Tinseltown hack Norman Panama, also directed THE ROAD TO HONG KONG). And even if the two headliners have all the charisma of a 4th-rate Atlantic City lounge act, the

supporting cast is worth a laugh in this tepid, horror movie spoof.

The ever-bickering Rowan & Martin play Smith & Grey, a pair of nudie-pic filmmakers (Note: The film is G-rated!) in the midst of lensing LUNAR LUST. When their business is unexpectedly shuttered, the pair heads to Martin's big old house in Flushing, New York, where a chewed-on corpse was found in a nearby cemetery, detective Robert Reed is on the case, and the murderer was heard howling in the night. It gets even more convoluted when Dick becomes convinced he's a werewolf, since he too has an uncontrollable desire to howl. In a dream sequence he actually transforms into one (and badly too), complete with sport coat and tie, and riding a motorcycle. Dumb? Absolutely. Funny? Not for one fucking moment.

We also get the Hungarian neighbors, the Ravenswood's---Addam's Family clones played by Fritz Weaver and Julie Newmar, as brother and sister oddballs, who might also be 300-year-old vampires. Plus Carol Lynley as a cute boarder who becomes Martin's love interest (for that hint of science fiction) and Leon Askin, best remembered as General Burkhalter in HOGAN'S HEROES.



This is dopey shit which piles on the hoary horror staples including secret passageways, rainy nights, a lost fortune, and bodies that turn up missing the moment the cops arrive. There are even three different endings, all of them idiotic, of course. Unfortunately, its success relies on the charisma of Rowan and Martin, and although Rowan is fine as the fast-talking weasel, Martin is cringeably inane as a put-upon Nice Guy, who exudes all the on-screen charisma of Quentin Tarantino. Unless you've got a nostalgic urge to see Rowan & Martin floundering on the big-screen, this pic is a dumb, bumpy road.

FISHING WITH JOHN (1990-1991).

One of the strangest TV shows of all time has never actually played on U.S. television. Directed and starring John Lurie (DOWN BY LAW), and produced for Japanese TV, this wickedly clever half-hour show is a deadpan take-off of the traditional Fishing Show milieu. I've seen four episodes (each one weirder than the last), and the premise has Lurie taking a different Special Guest to a portion of the world, to test out their fishing skills (with his Japanese crew in tow). And as these ever-mutating duos ramble on and on, you quickly realize that Lurie doesn't have the faintest idea how to fish, and seems to be making it all up as he goes along.

First off, Lurie and Jim Jarmusch take a macho drive to Montauk, Long Island in search of shark. Throughout, Jarmusch looks bored with their 'adventure' ("Why am I here?" his voiceover repeats) and after no success, these city boys get so desperate they try to lure up a shark by holding a chunk of cheese over the water, while Lurie levels a gun at it. Next, we get Lurie and Tom Waits on a Jamaican tug boat, going after red snapper. Waits looks like he's going to have a stroke when he's informed they're waking up at 5 a.m., after which, he immediately gets seasick ("I'd hate to throw up. It was such a beautiful breakfast. I'd like to hang onto it for a little bit longer.") and ends up playing cards with the locals. Lurie then flies off with Matt Dillon to the wilds of Costa Rica, searching for snook and tarpon. Increasingly surreal, this episode comes complete with the Magical Fish Dance, a Holy Choir courtesy of the "Fishing With John Singers", and reverse photography of fish leaping into Lurie's hand.

Without question, the best is saved for last, with Lurie and Willem Dafoe heading to the frozen north for some ice fishing. First they build a shack out of "local debris" (including a stove and carpeting?), but they have so much bad luck that Lurie worries they'll starve (or freeze) to death, while existing on nothing but cheese crackers for over a week. And wait until you witness the fate of these two intrepid sportsmen! Highlighted by dreamlike theme music courtesy of Lurie and ridiculously matter-of-fact narration from Rob Webb, this is the TWIN PEAKS of star-studded fishing shows.

BLAST OF SILENCE (VSoM; 1961).

Ever since its mention in ReSearch's INCREDIBLY STRANGE FILMS, I've been trying to locate this illusive pic—a whacked-out, noir low-budgeter that's right up there with SHACK OUT ON 101 and Joseph E. Lewis' GUN CRAZY. In a perfect world, this blast of cinematic nuttiness should've put 26-year-old director/writer/actor Allen Baron on the map. Instead, he made a few forgettable flicks (FOXFIRE LIGHT, OUTSIDE IN), but is still around nowadays, doing the occasional live appearance in conjunction with this gem.

Baron stars as Frankie Bono, a hitman loner who visits Manhattan at Xmas for a job. Meanwhile, gravelly-voiced Lionel Stander provides the hilariously high-pulp voice-over (penned by Mel Davenport), which makes Mike Hammer sound like Quentin Crisp. "When people look at you, baby boy, Frankie Bono, they see *death*," Stander explains, adding that he's in town to kill "a second string syndicate boss with too much ambition...and a mustache to hide the fact he has lips like a woman."

After buying a hot .38 from a crazy fat slob named Ralphie (Larry Tucker, who later co-developed The Monkees), the tight-lipped Bono has 24 hours to chill out and (as Stander puts it) "lose yourself in the Christmas spirit with the rest of the suckers." By coincidence, he runs into an old associate from the orphanage, meets the guy's sister (Molly McCarthy), and lowers his guard enough to go to a party with them. Still, Bono only knows how to treat this Nice Girl like a piece of meat, while the movie sidesteps romance like it was dogshit on the sidewalk, with the ever-sociable Stander advising, "If you want a woman, buy one. In the dark, so she won't remember your face." Bono also trails his prey, and visits the Village Gate for some authentically wretched bongos and Beat vocals.

The framing and editing have an experimental edge, while Baron spews out some incredibly brutal set pieces; like when Ralphie shakes down Bono, and in return, Frankie take a fire ax to him, beats him with a lamp, and strangles him. Wow! Baron doesn't skimp on location shooting either, from the Staten Island Ferry and Harlem, to various rooftops and an amazing, rain-swept finale. Plus, one look at the realistic rathole apartments tells you that these filmmakers are all-too-familiar with their territory. Oddly enough, since Bono is such a expressionless, humorless cipher, it's difficult to tell if Baron can act or not. It's difficult to think of another film from that era that's so stark, sleek and anti-social---since that type of attitude didn't become fashionable until the *late* '60s. It's 76 minutes of over-the-top B-movie dementia.

BLACK MAMA, WHITE MAMA (Orion; 1973).

Prepare yourself for another stinky chunk of American-International cheese. In this instance, we get Women In Prison trash that's fueled by a hoary high concept and a pair of extraordinary exploitation starlets. First, there's Pam Grier, who was in the first stretch of her mid-'70s grindhouse stardom. Then there's statuesque, blonde Margaret Markov, who popped up in THE HOT BOX, and was one of the few actresses who could hold her own against Grier's take-no-shit charms.

In all honesty, they're the only reason this film is even remotely remembered, despite an original story by Joe Viola and future Oscar-magnet Jonathan Demme. In large part, that's because director Eddie Romero (TWILIGHT PEOPLE, BRIDES OF BLOOD) is a complete hack, who once again takes us to the Philippines and never follows through on his script's potential. Considering all the cinematic ingenuity he bring to this tale, he would've been better off lensing episodes of THE HOLLYWOOD SQUARES.

The story begins with a busload of new inmates arriving at the local "women's rehabilitation center" (a.k.a. prison work camp). Pam plays Lee Daniels, a happy hooker in a low-cut evening gown, and Karen (Markov) is a white revolutionary who wants to "set this island free." Of course, their social differences are put on hold so they can take a long, gratuitous shower, while the pic's evil lesbian matron plays voyeur. And when Grier and Markov get into a catfight, they end up in the camp's hot box (topless, of course).

This quickly turns into THE DEFIANT ONES with tits, when the abrasive duo are shackled together at the wrist while being transferred; then Markov's guerrilla goons attack the bus, and set the pair on the run. As expected, Grier will have nothing to do with Markov's "jive-ass revolution." But during their journey together, we do get some odd images, like when the two escapees jump a couple nuns, steal their habits and go undercover. Pam Grier as a nun? Now *there's* something you don't see everyday.

Mostly, the two scurry about the wilderness in their skimpy mini-dresses, while Markov's freedom fighters need her to retrieve their latest shipment of guns. We also get the beloved Sid Haig (SPIDER BABY) as Ruben, a bounty hunter who sports a cowboy hat and hideous fringe-shirts. Plus, Vic Diaz as a sleazy, drug-running pimp. This doesn't hold a candle to Demme's WIP epic, CAGED HEAT, which would hit theatres the following year, but the leads' cut-rate charisma makes you forget the stupidity of the movie they've signed onto. As far as I'm concerned, *that's* the sign of a Real Star.

ANGEL NUMBER 9 [a.k.a. Angel On Fire] (Alpha Blue Archives; 1974).

After her nudie-roughie career with then-hubbie Michael, Roberta Findlay became one of the few women in the early porno field, getting a chance to direct (and use her real name) on pics like TEENAGE MILKMAIDS and THE CLAMDIGGER'S DAUGHTER. These flicks probably turned out as well as they did because Findlay didn't actually like X-rated movies, so instead of wasting all her energy on the hardcore sex scenes, she also did her best to make a halfway decent film. In this case, she created a jism-house take on the hoary, gender-switching yarn GOODBYE CHARLIE (later incarnated as Blake Edwards's SWITCH and Chuck Vincent's CLEO AND LEO), and this shot-in-NYC 35mm raunch was undeniably Roberta's baby, since she directed, produced, photographed, scripted, and even editing it (the last one, under her old "Anna Riva" pseudonym).

Steven, a cruel casanova, enjoys using, abusing, and tossing women aside. And after dumping his latest girlfriend when she announces she's pregnant, he's hit by a mini-van (the driver couldn't see, because he was getting a blowjob). Steven ends up in a diaphanous vision of Heaven, and meets Jennifer Jordan as the scantily-clad Angel No.9 (an angel with tan lines? Why not!), who informs him that his punishment for screwing over so many women is to be returned to earth as a hot li'l blonde "in order to learn how a broken heart feels." "I'd rather be dead than be woman," he exclaims. Of course, Steven and our Angel also find the time for a quick sextupp.

Steven's new incarnation, Stephanie, is played by Darby Lloyd Rains (who also starred in the Amero Brothers' EVERY INCH A LADY), and she's so anxious to test out her new body that she screws the mini-van guy who ran her down. She then masturbates in the shower, gets it on with one of Steven's old girlfriends, and soon discovers what a bastard he/she once was. That fact is driven home when Steph falls for the cheap tricks of lout photographer Jamie Gillis, who gets to rips into the newly-pregnant Stephanie with "raise the bastard child yourself, or get a fucking abortion."

As Findlay put it in a '70s TAKE ONE interview, "I hire actors who will screw as opposed to screwers who I try to make act, which is impossible." It definitely shows. You can also tell this was made by a woman since the female characters are halfway intelligent, loving, caring folks, while all of the men heartless shitheels. More importantly, when was the last time pregnancy or abortion was mentioned in a porno movie? Miles above the usual dreck and containing a smidgen of emotional honesty, this is a surprisingly subversive twist on the usual 42nd Street swill.

PLAYGIRL KILLER [a.k.a. Decoy For Terror] (1968).

Disturbed Artist horror pics are always a treat as far as I'm concerned, from HOUSE OF HORRORS [SC#7] to the seminal A BUCKET OF BLOOD. This Canadian murder romp from director Erick Santamaria also makes the grade; it's inept, lovable and loaded with (unintentionally) hilarious moments. Plus, before the psychosis gets rolling, there's special guest star Neil Sedaka! As "rock 'n' roll singer" Bob, this doughy-faced drip gets to oil down a bikini-ed babe, warble "Waterbug" at a pool party, and display all the charisma of Willard Scott in a G-string. Still, he's a hoot! And as quickly as he arrives, Neil disappears for the rest of the movie.

From then on, we're in the hands of William Kerwin (H.G.Lewis' LIVING VENUS), starring as a petulant artist named Bill (you can tell he's an artist, because he sports a goatee), who murders one of his whiny models with a handy spear gun, because she just won't stay still when he's sketching her. You see, once she's dead, he can take his time in refining his so-called artwork (which consists of incompetent Figure Drawing 101 fare).

Then he gets hired on by a sexpot named Arlene, who's hot for this mature stranger. And after killing Arlene, Kerwin takes over her upscale home and begins luring in new modeling candidates (including nightclub songstress Nikki), knocking them all off, and keeping these dead dames on ice in a handy freezer, so they can all be subjects for his epic new canvas. But what happens when a power outage threatens to thaw out his artistic dreams?

There's no nudity, but plenty of tease, while Kerwin gives this crazy-eyed, frustrated psycho an appropriately driven quality. He has the right look, the perfect throwaway mannerisms, and he seems to be having a ball to boot. All in all, a terrific piece of cheesy crap, which is even more relevant nearly three decades later, since most present-day supermodels certainly deserve the same fate that Kerwin's ladies receive.

39 STRIPES (1979).

Yes, it's more Holy Hokum from Ron Ormond who, early in his career, gave us drive-in swill like GIRL FROM TOBACCO ROW [SC#8] and THE EXOTIC ONES [SC#3], before turning Born Again and bringing the cinematic Word of God to rural shitheads throughout the Deep South. This is another unintentional laff riot in the form of an "educational" film. A Christian hoe-down, with Ron directing, producing, writing, editing, et cetera, with talent-barren son Tim Ormond starring in this crock.

Tim stars as Ed Martin, a rebellious prisoner on a chain gang, who keeps pissing off the guards with little, everyday things (like escaping), only to get tortured by the screws. For the supporting cast of jailbirds, it looks like Ron scoured the county for every in-bred cousin who was sitting on a front porch, pickin' at his ear with a stick. Meanwhile, Ed is so hardboiled that he ignores letters from his saved sister, who's attending Bible College in New York.

What could open his heart (and soften his mind) for The Lord? The caring of a good, Christian woman (Nancy Harper)! Soon, Ed begins to regret his past sins, reads the Bible during rest periods, and gets the crap beaten out of him by Evil fellow inmates. Of course, I can't really blame 'em, because after suffering through his ceaseless, holier-than-thou bullshit, I wanted to do the same. Scariest of all, Ed goes from being a normal (albeit anti-social) guy, to a spineless bore, without one active brain cell under that Bert Convy perm.

When this guy finally accepts Jesus, there won't be a dry seat in the house. And in the most idiotic moment, when Ed preaches to the prisoners, even the worst, most grizzled cons are shown The Way. Hallelujah! [Warning: These scenes come complete with stock footage from some crappy, out-of-focus Christ pic.] Caked with sledgehammer religiprop aimed straight at the already converted, Tim Ormond's total lack of charisma makes him seem like an honest-to-goodness Christ Freak. And F.Y.I., the title refers to the 39 scars the prisoners get across their bare backs from the guard's whip. Terrible in every possible way, this is the filet mignon of religion bombast.

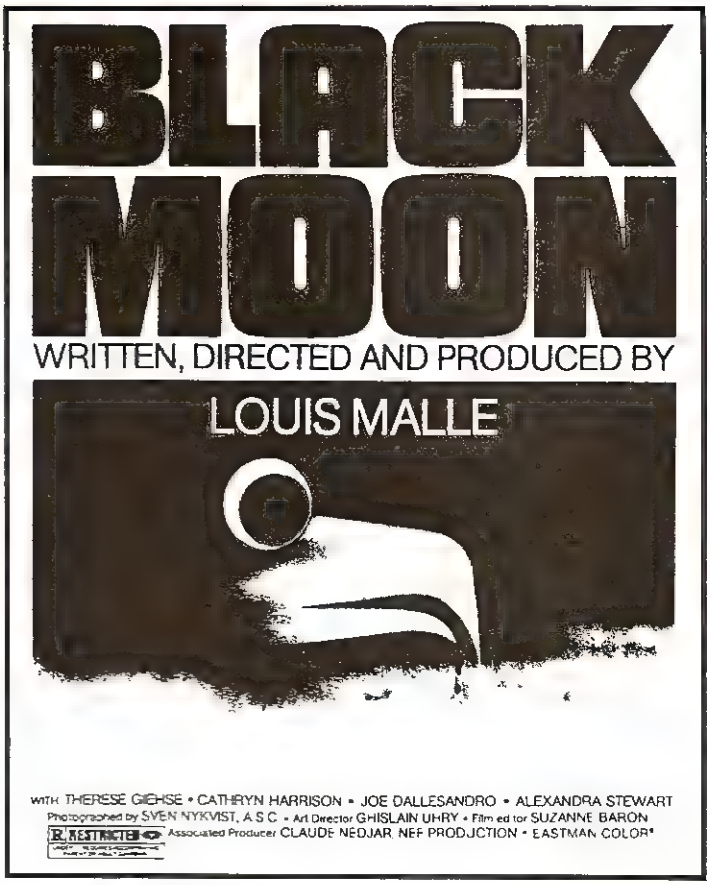
YEARS OF THE BEAST (J4HI; 1981).

For unparalleled, dumb-ass laughs, nothing beats a truly demented Christian propaganda pic. This "fictional account concerning a great Biblical truth" is a jaw-dropper, with director D. Paul Thomas emerging as a lost genius in the slim (but stupid) field of Rapture Filmmaking. Lensed in the Seattle area and adapted from the novel by Leon Chambers (I'm sure he sold a bunch of 'em at local flea markets), Gary Bayer stars as Dr. Stephen Miles, a college prof (a.k.a. Godless Intellectual) who gets a firsthand encounter with Biblical prophecy when The Rapture suddenly takes place.

Wham! Instantly, everyone who believes in all that Jesus bullshit is sucked into Heaven, while the non-believers (atheists and redneck assholes) think it was just a weird earthquake. Of course, all hell soon breaks loose, with supermarket panics over food and young punks running wild with drugs (!) and alcohol (!). Best of all, even graves are torn open in the wake of The Rapture, leaving nothing but an open casket and a pile of cheap funeral duds.

The rest of the pic shows us the breakdown of society now that all the god-fearing folks are gone, with martial law in effect and the nitwit local cops gunning down people for simply hoarding food. Meanwhile, Miles and his wife head out of town to her dad's farm and run into character-actor Jerry Houser (SUMMER OF '42, SLAP SHOT). Of course, soon Miles learns to love Jesus and joins a renegade band of Christians who've gone underground since religion is now illegal. Chalk that new law up to the "Prince of the World" (a.k.a. The Beast), who wants his Mark placed on all of his minions. And you won't believe the mind-bending finale, when our now-enlightened heroes flee from their plague-ravaged foes, only to be saved by *God's UFO's* !

This is a classic example of Apocalypse Cinema. Sanctimonious, Bible-hogwash which is far from the usual Sunday School slop, since they obviously dropped some serious bucks on this "epic." Amidst their lame proselytizing, the filmmakers even cram in some kickass Christian thrills—like seeing an entire metropolis of heathens vaporized. On a frightening note, I'm told this is the third in a trilogy, preceded by MARK OF THE BEAST and DISTANT THUNDER, but I'd suggest going straight to the heart of weirdness with this four-star finale. Full of anti-social idiocy, it's the perfect film to embrace if you're holed up on a heavily-armed Montana farm. On the other hand, maybe *this* is the type of crapola that put those type of freaks there in the first place.



BLACK MOON (1975).

The late Louis Malle is best remembered for his character-driven, critically-acclaimed arthouse dramas. But not all of his films are so well-remembered, such as this lyrical, half-baked fantasy, which is sure to irritate remedial filmgoers within minutes, since little is ever explained, and the pace is often coma-inducing.

15-year-old Cathryn Harrison (Rex's granddaughter) stars as Lily, a wide-eyed young lass, driving across the countryside. From the look of things, the world is in the middle of a literal war between the sexes, with male soldiers rounding up uniformed females and executing them. Unfortunately, tucking her blonde tresses under her hat can't disguise this babe as a man. She gets fired at by the troops, escapes in her bullet-riddled car, runs into a band of female forest guerrillas, and finally enters a magical countryside.

From there on, it drops its grubbier societal subtext, and turns into an unfathomable fairy tale. Lily glimpses a unicorn, flowers cry in pain, and she enters a huge house, where a bedridden old woman (Therese Giehse) talks to a rat in some weird language. To put it succinctly, "Huh?" With little dialogue and even less logic, it feels like Malle was making it up as he went along (frighteningly enough, he wasn't). Almost an hour into the film, Lily demands "Will you please tell me what's going on around here?", which is exactly what I was wondering since the opening scenes.

Alexandra Stewart (Malle's then-current companion, and co-star of MICKEY ONE) is the mute Sister, while Joe Dallesandro, best remembered for his starring gig in Paul Morrissey's FLESH/HEAT/TRASH trilogy, co-stars as the equally-silent gardener Brother—once again proving he's got a great presence (and little else). Luckily, no real acting is needed, since the film relies totally on mood and puzzling sequences. A flock of sheep run about the estate, followed by a flock of naked little girls. Lily lets the foul, lip-smacking old woman suckle at her breast, and searches for her illusive unicorn (actually, an overweight, gray pony with a lame excuse for a horn). And within the confines of the estate, the chaos of 'civilization' is ignored (though the occasional dead soldier *does* pop up on the property).

This is a four-star mess, with Sven Nykvist's evocative photography the only consistent thing about it. Ravishing, but also frustratingly obtuse, perhaps the driving force behind this lark is that it gave Malle a chance to make a movie in and about his own home and spacious estate. When it comes to Artsy Pretentious Crap, this pic is off the scale. What does it all mean? Only Malle knew, and nowadays, he ain't telling

WORKING WITH ORSON WELLES (198?).

Why focus on a no-budget documentary about the ultimate studio misfit? Because this pic was pieced together by sleaze fave Gary Graver who, when he wasn't directing Triple-A '70s exploitation, worked with Orson as his cameraman/assistant/friend from 1970 to 1985—from lensing the still-unfinished THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WIND (starring John Huston, as well as other director-pals like Dennis Hopper and Curtis Harrington), to playing the Audience Ringer during Orson's magical TONIGHT SHOW appearances.

Unfortunately, Graver is such a stiff that he's unable to convey the passion behind this project, so it's up to the pic's mish-mash of photos, rare film clips and anecdotes to do the job. Many of them are priceless. Most entertaining are the snippets about WIND, with Cameron Mitchell, Susan Strasberg and character actor Peter Jason describing just how confused everyone was, trapped in the middle of Arizona for six months with an ever-mutating script. What's funniest is how they all label The Huge One's obvious, egotistic insanity as some sort of spontaneous genius.

Graver also pads out the film with the often-seen trailer for C.KANE (zzzz...), but a more fascinating treat is Welles' b&w workprint of a 12-minute trailer for F FOR FAKE, which looks more like some tripped-out, underground movie, highlighted by nudie pix of Orson's protégé, Oja Kodar. There's also a clip from Graver's short film, BEGGARS WOULD RIDE, which Orson narrated; tidbits from FILMING OTHELLO; and Stacy Keach reminiscing about meeting Orson during the classic BUTTERFLY. All the while, three things remain consistent about Welles: Shouting, Eating and Bullshiting.

This project looks like it was cobbled together from leftover footage Graver had laying about his apartment. Still, it's packed with insights into Welles' mind (if not his genius). Of course, when Graver compares his time with Orson to a "15 year film school," you can't help but wonder why he's wasting all this hands-on-education nowadays as a straight-to-video, cinematographer-for-hire for clods like Jim Wynorski.

SANDRA, THE MAKING OF A WOMAN (SWV; 1970).

Around the same time that Gary Graver was first getting tight with Orson Welles, he also cranked out this surprisingly-energetic, coming-of-age sexploitation. Although loaded with the requisite sexcapades, you get the feeling that director/editor/photographer Graver was also striving for a modicum of cut-rate reality, while his high-octane cinematic savvy graces the most generic horseshit with radical energy and imagination.

Best of all, this sexplosion has Monica Gayle baring it all in the title role, several years before popping up as "Patch" in Jack Hill's seminal SWITCHBLADE SISTERS. For this early gig, she's got dirty blonde hair and plays a 19-year-old rural babe who gets fed-up with her emotional wreck of a Dad; who slaps her around and guzzles cheap hooch by the glassful. Tossing her virginity away to some local pinhead (who instantly wants to marry her), she then hitches her way to San Francisco, with the aid of a fetishistic lingerie salesman. On her own for the first time, a biker feels her up in a movie theatre, she's hit on by her lesbian landlord, and she gets a job as a horny psychiatrist's receptionist. Of course, since Sandra craves sex as badly as they do, it all works out fine.

It's usually a waste of time to mention acting when it comes to early sex-pics, but in this instance, Gayle is actually good as the down-trodden country gal, who dumps her repressed home town in order to 'find herself' in the Big City. Don't confuse this with some type of feminist tract though, because most of the time Sandra is flat on her back, with some nameless dick inside of her. In addition, what makes Gayle so enticing is that she looks and acts like a *real* person—not like today's surgically-enhanced lab experiments, passing themselves off as sex-starlets.

The script also gets points for not viewing Sandra as a slutty nympho. Instead, she's just an average girl learning to enjoy life and love (while all the local guys queue up around her bed). But its Graver's style-to-burn which makes this film a treat. Whether it's his witty editing (Sandra masturbating in bed, intercut with her liquor-blinded dad driving off a cliff), or his overwrought camerawork, which does anything to embellish the tepid sex sequences. This is a prime example of a talented filmmaker doing his damnedest to turn a sow's ear into a slightly more artistic sow's ear. Happily, he succeeded.

BONJOUR MONSIEUR LEWIS (1982).

First off, let me proudly announce that Jerry Lewis is a God. A greasy-headed, egotistical, slimebag God, mind you, but *still* a God. And this six-hour documentary treats him as one. And who else but a Frenchman (in this case, director Robert Benayoun) would even consider tackling this type of brain-numbing project? Sure, it sounds like a sick joke, but it's not.

Unfortunately, I was only able to secure the first four hours of this epic portrait of *Le Professor Imbecile*, but that's more than enough Lewis schtick to send most folks running (to the bathroom?)—spanning Jerry's early mega-success with Dean right up to shooting THE KING OF COMEDY. It's also wild to learn that this human pack-rat has saved every scrap of film that he's ever developed in his basement library (his estimate: "5 to 6 million feet of tape and film"). From the look of this messy (but epic) profile, it seems Benayoun was allowed to rummage at will.

Bursting with rare clips and movie outtakes (Jerry dropping his pants, shoving his head under a matron's skirt; in other words, his classier side), some of the highlights include: Jerry interrupting a Sammy Davis Jr. song with his spastic water routine; Jerry at La Comedie Francaise; Sinatra reuniting the long-parted Martin and Lewis during the MD Telethon; Jerry teaching a film course; and even some footage from Jerry's ultra-obscure TV-version of THE JAZZ SINGER. Alot of this is also genuinely funny—like the skit "Ne Reveillez pas le Bebe," which has Jerry playing a 31-year-old son who's still treated like an infant by his doting mom ("Let me have a cigarette, ma!").

The pic loses a little steam in the third and fourth hours, when focusing on his relationship with children and smarmier edge. You also have to wade through several renditions of "You'll Never Walk Alone", while his ancient "musical typewriter" routine is so grating that you'll want to drive your shoe up his shriveled ass. On the other hand, you never know when Benayoun will slip in a real treat—like a clip of Jerry's dad, his son and himself, singing "Sonny Boy."

There are also brief interviews with such comparable lightweights as Martin Scorsese, Louis Malle, Steven Spielberg, and Mel Brooks. By far, the best quip comes from John Landis, who says the MD telethon "encapsulates what is great, powerful and terrifying about the United States...this collection of awesome talent and equipment and electronic genius and *cripples*!"

Even if you can't understand one word of the unsubtitled French narration, almost everything else is in English and, as we *all* know, Jerry's (alleged) talent spans language barriers. Though far from the last word on this repellent comic genius (there are *no* clips from THE DAY THE CLOWN CRIED) and lacking a much-needed focus, this fabulous love letter will leave any Jerry Lewis fan drooling and limp with joy—capturing the man at his best, at his most annoying, and often both at the same time.

GODZILLA VS. THE DESTROYER [Gojira Tai Desutoroiya] (VSoM; 1995).

Almost everyone agreed that The Big G's previous outing against Space Godzilla was far from the top of the heap. Still, if you're an addict (like me), any new Godzilla movie is a reason to stock your fridge full of crappy beer and catch up with an old childhood friend. And now I can actually understand the plot, thanks to Video Search of Miami's personally-subtitled version.

This pic starts out by doing a lot of things right. First, it hires director Takao Ohgawara, who made the best '90s entries, QUEEN MOTHRA and MECHAGODZILLA. It also tosses aside all the juvenile subplots and makes Godzilla a city-stomping *villain* again. Yeah! And in this era of CGI overdose, it's nice to know that this series still relies on guys inside big, sweaty monster suits. Most important, this will be remembered for giving us The Death of Godzilla. Yes, this time around The Green One has a good reason to be pissed off, since he's on the verge of exploding! It seems Godzilla's nuclear power energy source is about to melt down, making his chest glow bright red. And if the puny humans don't do something, it could ignite the entire planet.

While the government once again rolls out their high-tech Super X-III plane, a scientist has created a "Micro-Oxygen" which can be turned into a deadly weapon, similar to the Oxygen Destroyer in the very first GODZILLA. This Micro-Oxygen still has a few kinks though, like infecting a city aquarium and leaving nothing but bones, and worse still, reviving tiny, prehistoric crablike creatures that've been buried under Tokyo Bay. Soon these little critters have grown into ferocious eight-foot-tall monsters which spit Micro-Oxygen, topple heavily-armed Special Forces teams, and look about as convincing as Barney. These creatures can also merge and transform into a huge, flying, scaly new foe for Godzilla, who has smoke literally pouring off his body, as he turns Japan's high-rent districts to rubble.

Godzilla Jr. is also back on board, but don't cringe too quickly. Because instead of the cutsy, Muppet-like abomination from SPACE GODZILLA, he now looks like a half-pint version of his parent. And the humans (Takuro Tatsumi, Yoko Ishino) are only around to provide a vague plot behind the cool monster mayhem, such Destroyer dropping Li'l Godzilla from the air, or separating back into its smaller critters and crawling all over Papa G. This is kickass fun, with a grungy new villain and filmmakers who obviously know the series' strengths. It even includes clips from the 1954 original, when discussing Japan's first encounter with Godzilla. And don't cry at the ending—remember, there's a very capable Junior waiting in the wings for *his* turn in the center ring.

SCREAM OF STONE (1991).

Werner Herzog may not always make the greatest movies, but they're worth a look when this madman is dealing with obsessed crackpots. This, his most recent fiction feature, may be far from his best, but I still can't understand why this mountain-climbing melodrama never got a U.S. release. It boasts grueling locales, a couple of Hollywood names, and is unquestionable more interesting than most of the shitty U.S. pics currently sucking up theatre space.

If you've got a fear of heights, the opening sequence will have you shitting your pants, as we watch a climber working his way up a treacherous cliffside, at a nausea-inducing altitude, using only his bare hands. This isn't a CLIFFHANGER-style studio-fake-job though, it's the *real* thing. After Herzog has gotten our attention, the script pits the contrasting philosophies of two mountain climbers against each other. On one hand, there's Martin (Vittorio Mezzogiorno), a young, brash TV celeb who prefers freehand style (often on AMERICAN GLADIATORS-style indoor walls). On the other, there's Roger (Stefan Glowacz), a older, world-class veteran climber.

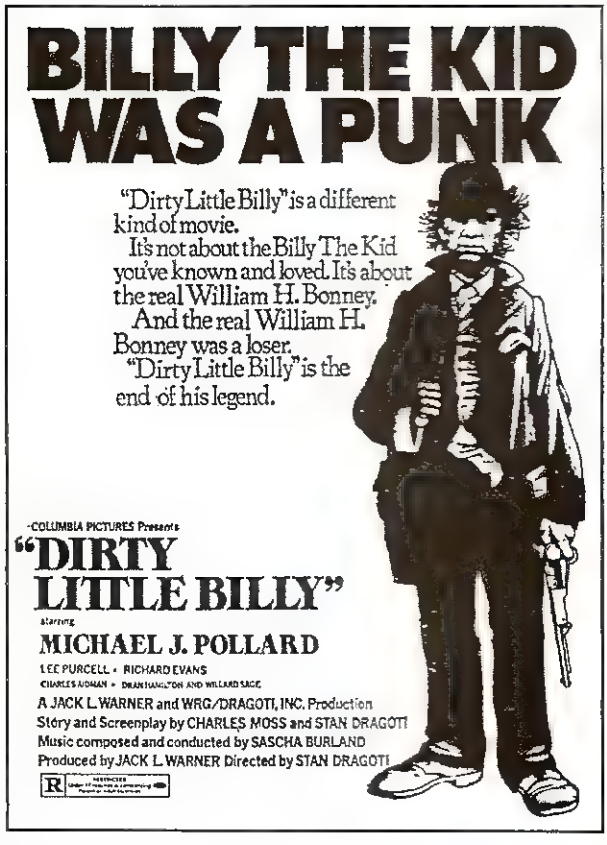
After some tedious drama, the thrills finally kick in when Roger and Martin head to Patagonia, Argentina and attempt to scale a hellish chunk of rock, rising almost straight out of the earth and layered in ice. Bright idea, guys. Roger has already tried twice (and failed), and the story turns into The Older Pro vs. The Rebel Hotshot, with Donald Sutherland coming along (on auto-pilot) as a often-manipulative journalist. There's also Mathilda May (the sexy naked space vampire in LIFEFORCE) as disposable romantic relief. The end result? Roger goes into seclusion (in South America) in the aftermath, but a year later, they return to the peak for another highly publicized duel-ascent.

Best of all, the always odd Brad Dourif has a hilarious bit part as a kook named Fingerless, who lives on the mountain in order to stay perpetually "on the edge," and pops up from time to time to babble about how he's someday going to go back up the mountain to find his lost fingers. Brad's at his wigged-out best, and personally I'd love to see him and Crispin Glover playing brothers someday.

Since the human drama is convoluted, I'd advise you to forget all these flat leads and revel in the spectacular, top-of-the-world footage, which includes torturous climbing, sudden snow storms, and godawful filming conditions. Capturing the beauty and determination of the sport, it's during these moments that you can see why Werner was drawn to this half-baked script. It looks like the cast and crew were put through hell, but I bet Herzog was having a ball every inch of the way.

DIRTY LITTLE BILLY (1972).

I don't believe it. A great movie from Stan Dragoti, the shit-meister behind multiplex pabulum like MR. MOM and SHE'S OUT OF CONTROL. Well, the guy certainly proved his directing chops after graduating from TV commercials and teaming up with producer Jack L. Warner for this saga of the old west. This is no typical, Tinseltown western though. It's more like The Making of a Sociopath, with Michael J. Pollard starring as displaced, 17-year-old Billy Bonney, in the days leading up to his evolution into the notorious Billy the Kid. Leaving New York City with his mom and (asshole) step-dad, the trio is first glimpsed arriving at a tiny Kansas cesspool named Coffyville; a DJANGO-like shanty town which keeps the entire cast continually ankle deep in dried mud, and with cinematographer Ralph Woolsey (THE MACK) bringing out the worst in the place.



It's immediately evident that Billy is inept at farming, and this "punk" soon falls into bad company at the local saloon-whorehouse; meeting a gambler-killer named Goldie (Richard Evans) and Lee Purcell as Berle, a pretty, gun-totin' whore. Much of the pic consists of Billy, Goldie and Berle holed up inside the tiny saloon, drinking, bonding, screwing, and passing out. Meanwhile, outside the saloon door, this shithole is trying to become recognized by the government as a 3rd-class town, even if it takes a neighboring epidemic to raise their population enough to do so. After that, the townsfolk can finally get a sheriff and drive the scum outta town.

This is the perfect role for Pollard. And though a little old to play a teenager (he was 33), he hands us a Billy who's perpetually victimized by bad luck, until he finally blows a gasket at the very end and sparks his future. The supporting cast is also solid, with a stand-out perf from Purcell, who's tough, unromantic, and able to handle herself in a knife fight. She leaves such an impression that you wonder why her career never ignited, despite roles in equally eccentric '70s pics like KID BLUE, ADAM AT 6A.M. and BIG WEDNESDAY. There are also brief appearances from Gary Busey as a long-haired hick kid, Ronny Graham as the town drunk, Severn Darden as a thief, and (for the biggest laugh) Dick Van Patten, who pops up for a few seconds as one of Berle's customers.

This is a true anti-western, without a character that you can totally warm up to, since they're either inept, crazy, stupid or ruthless. Except Purcell, that is, so you can understand why Billy falls for her. Even the occasional moment of violence—like a barroom blowout—is quick, brutal and totally convincing. Unlike any western you've ever seen, this is McCABE AND MRS. MILLER's evil brother.

COPACABANA (VSoM; 1985).

Heaven help us all! It's Barry Manilow's made-for-TV musical, based on his hit tune. Are you at all surprised to learn it's a thoroughly misguided, painfully laughable waste of time? It makes ANNIE look watchable, and not only does it feature this blonde geek's music, but Manilow also shoves his ugly puss in front of the camera in the lead role, while demonstrating all the natural charisma of head lice.

Leave it to executive producer Dick Clark to pump out this mega-drivel, along with hack director Waris Hussein (who has loads of films to his credit, and not one worth mentioning). At least they had the singular instance of good taste to hire the woefully underrated Annette O'Toole SMILE, CAT PEOPLE) for the ingenue role. It *almost* makes up for the presence of a pre-GOLDEN GIRL Estelle Getty.

Though it fails on every conceivable level, this musical fantasy *tries* to pay homage to '40s-style musicals, with Manilow playing Tony Star, a Brooklyn-bred *World War II veteran* (insert: laughter so hard that beer-runs out of your nose) who yearns to be a famous song-writer, runs into Lola Lamar (O'Toole) on a "Name That Tune"-style radio show, and eventually lands a bartending gig at NYC's famous Copacabana. Before you can say "Shut off this piece of crap!", Manilow is hawking songs to producers, Annette is working as a dime-a-dance girl and the two become a couple. Meanwhile, Annette proves her acting chops with the simple fact she doesn't vomit uncontrollably the moment Barry's lips touch hers.

Unfortunately, the script only recycles the hoariest, sappiest twists from the past. Along the rocky way, Barry meets his long-long Dad, loses Annette, and finally gets an on-stage gig, where he dances with all the grace of a duck with a brain tumor. In between the 'spectacular' musical numbers (which wouldn't cut it as 5th rate community theatre), Manilow has to save Annette from gangster Rico Caselli (Joe Bologna), who's whisked her to Havana.

As a romantic lead, Manilow is just below William Hickey on the Hunkiness Scale. Still, his character acts like God's Gift to AM Radio, and displays an ego almost as big as his nose. On the other hand, O'Toole is so charming that you wish she were in a *real* film. The worst thing? Everybody takes this steaming chunk of feces seriously! I can't believe this was ever greenlighted in the first place—the only way I can figure it, Manilow must've had photos of some studio exec schtupping a Girl Scout.

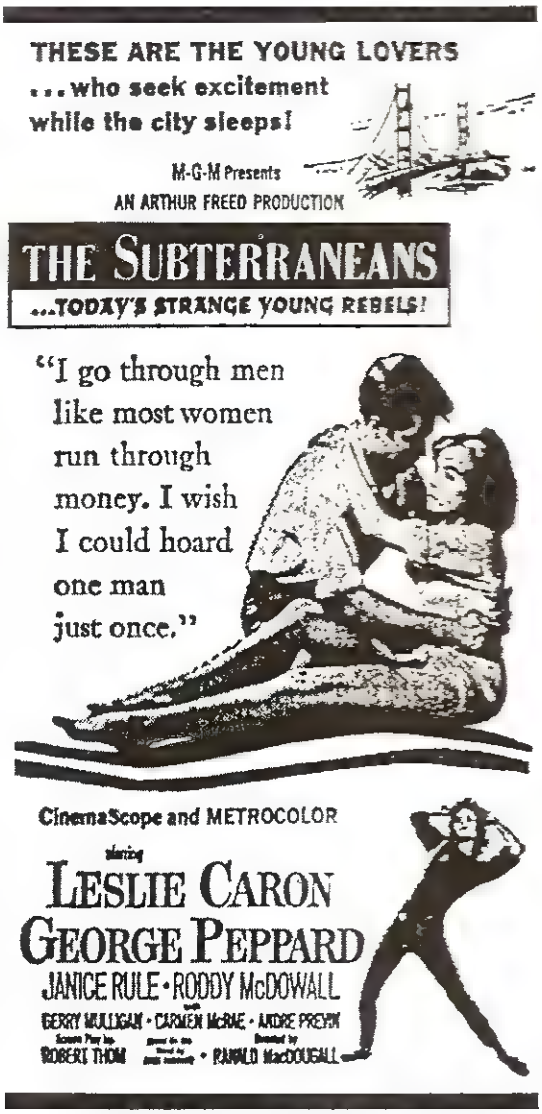
THE SUBTERRANEANS (1960).

Sure, this pic is based on the novel by Jack Kerouac, but don't get your hopes up. Because any fan of Kerouac's work will take a dump in their pants as they watch this fiasco, courtesy of the corporate slugs at MGM. Barely recognizable, this watered-down hatchet-job jumped onto Jack's bandwagon without a clue to what he was trying to say. The opening scrawl ("This is the story of a new Bohemia...where the young gather to create and to destroy") is painful enough, but director Ranald MacDougall (THE WORLD, THE FLESH AND THE DEVIL) ups the ante on this beatnik abomination with artificial sets, a wildly inappropriate cast, and the inability to capture even one fucking moment of truth. Plus, you *know* it's gonna suck the moment you hear the tasteful Andre Previn soundtrack. Uggh...

The cast is a joke, starting with Leslie Caron (GIGI) as sultry French babe, Mardou Fox (the fact that she's Black in the original novel didn't fly with the studio execs, I guess). Then, playing Leo (the Kerouac-like lead) we have white-bread George Peppard, still vying for Tinseltown stardom before dumping all dignity in THE A-TEAM. They're young, they're broke, they're pretentious as hell, and within moments, you'll want to kick all their sparkling little teeth down their throats.

The setting for this squeaky clean portrait of angst-filled young artists is San Francisco's North Beach, where 30+ Leo lives with his mom and still awaits fame from his first book, while spouting rhetoric like "I want every bit of life my body and brain can hold." Caron is supposed to be a mysterious, crazed neurotic, while Peppard's character is a big blonde drunk whose idea of writing is simply pumping the insipid dialogue from the night before onto the page. And soon these candy-coated cretins shack up and begin bickering *ad nauseum*.

The supporting cast is a surprisingly clean-cut bunch of derelicts. Roddy McDowall is unwatchable as a fast talking flake named Yuri, a pre-LAUGH-IN Arte Johnson is surprisingly amusing as the lone famous one in this group of (dead)Beats, and Janice Rule is a four-star howl as a man-hating dish who pours on the mascara to hide her pain (groan). Well, at least her modern dance numbers are something to watch. Unfortunately, I was laughing so hard that I forgot that this is the *real thing*! Hard-hitting! Long-Winded! Insulting! And essentially, just a runny romance swaddled in coffeehouses, B-movie emotions, and a happy ending (which, need I add, was *not* in the book). God, I hated this piece of tripe.



THE ORKLY KID (1984).

I'm not alone in thinking Crispin Glover is one of the weirdest Martians to ever emerge on the movie screen. His flat-out wacko performances make you seriously wonder how much bad acid his dad (equally oddball supporting goon, Bruce Glover) must've taken back in the sixties. I only wish he were getting *real* roles nowadays, instead of embellished cameos in pics like Jarmusch's DEAD MAN. But if you want a history lesson into the roots of Crispin's on-screen dementia, run (do not walk) to check out this pre-BACK TO THE FUTURE short film, which gives an indication of just what type of lovable freak he would someday become.

This 34-minute AFI production is the first collaboration between Crispin and writer director Trent Harris, the genius who would later grace the world with RUBIN & ED. Like that epic, this is a showcase for Crispin's spastic nerd routine, which gets under your skin in record time, like a teenaged Rupert Pupkin. Maybe worse.

Crispin stars as Larry, a dweeby teen trapped in the Idaho shithole of Orkly, and whose only dream is to be on the Boise TV station, doing his painful impersonations of John Wayne and Brando. Of course, the guy also has a secret life after dark—staring obsessively at his XANADU poster, and roaming the desert hills in his flowing blonde wig, listening to Olivia Newton-John music. Setting up a talent show at his local high school, he invites the unwashed press, rounds up the local (un)talent, and goes off the deep end. You see, this is Larry's chance to announce his Olivia N-J obsession to the world, going so far as to get the village mortician to make him up, and freaking out his pals by roaming backstage in full femme regalia.

Crispin is a total fright in his heavy eyeliner and lipstick, warbling "Please Don't Keep Me Waiting" (in paint-peeling soprano), and it's one of the more nervously painful sequences you'll witness in some time. Funny, edgy and unexpectedly poignant, this treat perfectly captures small-town America's xenophobia, especially when one fabulous oddball erupts in its midst.

VIVA KNIEVEL! (Warner Brothers; 1977).

No question, this is one of the most hilarious, festering sores ever committed to celluloid, starting with red, white and blue credits, and a theme song that'll burn a path to your brainpan ("One fine day, a man came to town,/ A king of the road, with a helmet for a crown,/ A motorcycle bird who is never comin' down.") Now them's lyrics! As an actor, Evel is so leaden that he can't even play *himself* convincingly, while the script makes this daredevil out to be a combination of John Wayne, Mother Teresa and Jesus Christ—all rolled up into

one self-promoting ass on a motorcycle. In fact, everybody on the planet adores Evel: The young, the old, women, nuns, crippled orphans who're inspired to throw away his crutches ("You're the reason I'm walking, Evel!"), and most importantly, Warner Brothers, who footed the bill for this one-legged dog.

Next, check out the obviously-pained supporting cast! Lauren Hutton is a tough-talking photographer who falls for this star-spangled dip; Red Buttons is Evel's money-grubbing promoter; Marjoe Gortner is Knievel's main competition, back on a bike after PRAY FOR THE WILDCATS [SC#6]; Leslie Nielsen is Gortner's scummy manager; Cameron Mitchell plays one of Nielsen's flunkies; Dabney Coleman pops up as the head of a sanitarium; and Frank Gifford (a.k.a. Mr. Kathy Lee) is himself, covering Evel's jumps. Best of all, Gene Kelly co-stars as Evel's booze-hound mechanic (not to mention, best friend), with poor decrepit Gene (who was 65 years old at the time) reunited with his estranged 11-year-old son (Eric "Apple's Way" Olsen).

As far as the screenplay is concerned, this guy is a fucking God! He even sneaks into orphanages in the middle of the night to hand out toys (Evel Knievel dolls, of course), lectures kids on the evils of drugs, and explains "I'm just a man doing my own thing." The plot has Evel going to Mexico with Nielsen & Gortner, unaware they're planning to knock him off and use his 18-wheel trailer to smuggle 3,000 bags of cocaine over the border. Best of all, Gene goes nuts, gets locked up in a padded cell and is accused of being a "dope addict." It even comes complete with a do-gooder, pro-family, anti-drug finale. I feel sick...

The best you can say about director Gordon Douglas (THEM!, SLAUGHTER'S BIG RIP-OFF), is that he combines the wooden melodrama of an Irwin Allen clinker with the stench of fresh roadkill. This is the type of career-shattering debacle that has to be cherished. And if there was any justice, the studio exec who greenlighted this sewage is, at this very moment, being awarded Employee of the Month at Denny's.

SINGAPORE SLING (1990).

This film is so terminally screwed-up that it even took *me* off guard, proving that there are still some sick-assed directors out there. In this case, it's Nicos Nicolaidis. Who? Though he's lensed several features (THE SWEET BUNCH, MORNING PATROL) in Greece, he's barely known on this side of the Atlantic—and that's only via the subversive grapevine. SLING is one of the kinkiest family epics since THUNDERCRACK!, highlighted by the type of abusive laughs that'll worm their way into any sleaze-addict's heart.

Michele Valley and Meredyth Herold star as a mother-and-grown-daughter team, who're first observed in a heavy rain, burying their chauffeur (who isn't quite dead yet, but who's telling?). Meanwhile, a bullet-wounded drifter crawls into the backseat of their car on this dark and stormy night. It turns out that this "Singapore Sling" (nicknamed thanks to a drink recipe found in his pocket) is looking for his missing Laura, and these wacky dames want this near-basketcase as their *new* chauffeur.

There are also flashbacks to the pair's homicidal roots, when a young woman (Singapore's Laura) indulges in kinky games with Mom, and ends up with her belly slit open and her juicy viscera on display. You see, the two ladies have had to do *all* the killing since Daddy died, though Daughter still hopes he's alive (even though the shitbag raped her when she was 11-years-old).

Along the way, there are plenty of gross-out tidbits, including a little bondage between Mom and Daughter, the naked Daughter straddling the stranger and vomiting on his face, plus some makeshift electroshock, as they pull Singapore into their deliriously deranged sexual games. Of course, Singapore's appearance creates a rift between the Mother and Daughter, and the finale is steeped in sick twists and the stink of rancid romance (all set to Rachmaninoff, no less).

This down-in-the-gutter psychodrama takes its sweet time (it's nearly two hours long) and has the claustrophobic mood and bewildering logic of a bad dream. The b&w photo-graphy gives it all a gothic noir edge, and when the sex 'n' gore begins to flow, prepare to pull on your hip-boots. This is a rarity nowadays—a gorgeously crafted film with a pure, unwavering dementia. These women are nuts, and it's obvious that this talented director is too.

UNMAN, WITTERING AND ZIGO (VSoM; 1971).

One of the earliest efforts from U.K. director John Mackenzie (THE LONG GOOD FRIDAY) was this under-baked psychological chiller set at a British private school. But unlike Lindsay Anderson's IF..., this time around it's the teacher who's the beleaguered victim, and looks more like THE BLACKBOARD JUNGLE meets LORD OF THE FLIES. Unfortunately, it's not half as good as either of those classics, and ends up as a simple, intriguing mess.

David Hemmings (BLOW UP) stars as John Ebony, the newest teacher at the far-from-top-notch Chantry school for teenage boys, situated along a treacherous cliffside. After setting up nearby residence with his wife (Carolyn Seymour), things get dicier when he meets his raucous Lower 5B class. Because the first time he gets strict, they matter-of-factly warn him not to, or else they might have to get rid of him—just as they got rid of their previous teacher, who 'accidentally' tumbled down those rocky cliffs. Should Hemmings believe their threat, even if the other teachers think he's a "bloody fool" for falling for their prank?

This is a crackerjack conceit, but Ebony is such a spineless wimp that you couldn't care less if they chucked him into the sea. He soon allows the boys to piss all over him (not literally, you sickos) and take over his class; forcing him to hand out fake grades, place bets on the horses, and when these young men begin oogling the pretty Ms. Ebony, I hoped this would twist into a STRAW DOGS-style, bloodsoaked finale. No such luck (although we do get a very disturbing, attempted gang rape). Instead, Ebony resurrects the remains of his spine and allows them to feed on each other for a change.

The biggest problem is that once you get past the basic situation, there's little motivation for the kids' behavior, except that they simply don't want to do their schoolwork. In other words, they aren't rebels, just pampered brats. And don't tell me there isn't a homo-erotic subtext at work here, especially with all the shots of boys in gym shorts and showering, plus a fantasy sequence in which they strip down Hemmings in the woods and carry him about. Hokey and unbelievable, but nicely lensed by the late Geoffrey Unsworth (2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY, ZARDOZ). F.Y.I.: the title comes from the last three names on Hemmings' class roster.

FUNERAL PROCESSION OF ROSES [Bara No Soretsu] (VSoM; 1969).

If you're searching for early, *severely* screwy Japanese cinema, you've found it in this gem, which ranks right up there with BLIND BEAST [SC#7] and BLACK LIZARD for gorgeously twisted sexuality. Understandably controversial during its initial release, this stylistic psycho-drama combines dramatic angst with rapid-fire weirdness, and gives us an eyes-wide-open look at the lifestyle of "Gay Bar Boys." At times, it had the same effect on my brain that ERASERHEAD did during my first encounter.

It begins with Eddie, a pretty young transvestite who's having an affair with Mita, the owner of the June Club. But to secure his position, he needs to eliminate the guy's current boyfriend, who is also the club's more traditional, current Madam. Sure, the storyline is bound to turn off some with its industrial-strength homo-eroticism, but get past it, you slobs! Give it a chance and you'll be sucked in by its explosive, unpredictable storytelling. One moment, we're watching a lighthearted scene of "girls" shopping and lining up at urinals for a cheap laugh. Then suddenly, there's Eddie's flashback to a woman bleeding from the gut like a stuck pig. Or how about those hallucinatory segues (this *is* 1969, remember)?

Along with the rampant, on-screen drug use, there's a tripped-out sensibility behind the camera to match, with director Toshio Matsumoto playing tricks with the viewer's head (i.e. a lengthy sex scene turns out to actually be a porno movie in the works). He also intercuts brief, occasionally uneasy interviews with the actors, snippets of film leader, and moments of sudden, reflexive humor.

Most important, Matsumoto is able to turn the film into more than just a barrage of ultra-cool sequences. This is a visual *and* emotional mindfuck, with the last half hour steeped in tragedy and obsession; a dive into Eddie's psyche, as well as an OEDIPUS REX-styled finale that's too brilliant 'n' brutal to totally divulge. Experimental, unsettling and subversive, it's rare to find a film (so long forgotten) which holds so many surprises.

HELL'S ANGELS '69 (1969).

In the wake of their success with grubby biker pics such as THE WILD ANGELS, leave it to AIP to try and make this anti-social genre more commercial by meshing the usual, beer-dribbling biker antics with an OCEANS 11-style "Let's Rob Las Vegas" storyline. It's pretty silly stuff, but the film get points for hiring Sonny Barger and his Oakland Hell's Angels (including Skip, Tiny, Magoo, and Terry the Tramp; all credited *above* the title), who give it a shot of authentic deviance.

Biker-pic vets Tom Stern (ANGELS FROM HELL [SC#8]) and Jeremy Slate (BORN LOSERS)—both of whom wrote the original story—star as a couple of half-brother California swingers. They decide to head out on "a mindbender...the Upper to end all Uppers," by dressing up in fake colors from a Boston biker club, infiltrating the Angels, schtupping their gals, getting the crap beaten out of them, and eventually joining them on a run to Las Vegas. The point? Stern and Slate are actually planning to rob Caesar's Palace and use the Angels as a convenient diversion.

It's fun watching Stern & Slate roam through a late-'60s Vegas casino, freaking out all the Normals with their dirtbag wardrobe (remember, is back when Vegas was a classy place—not its present desert Disneyland). But once in, they ditch their leathers for suits, comb their hair, and (all-too-easily) take the bank for 600 grand, while the entire security force is at the entrance, dealing with a sudden appearance by the infamous Hell's Angels. Of course, when the Angels realize they've been duped by some clean-cut "citizens," they head into the desert on dirt bikes, in pursuit.

Despite the hokey robbery scenario, the pic is packed with believable supporting hairballs and fun stunts (like speeding down the middle of a small-town sidewalk). At its best, it captures the essence of biker life, right down to the piles of empty beer cans and the sudden urge to kick someone's teeth in. Director Lee Madden (ANGEL UNCHAINED [SC#3]) gives it a crisp edge, with Conny Van Dyke as a disgruntled motorcycle mama and G.D. Spradlin as a local lawman. Despite some ridiculous plot twists, its grim, righteous ending makes you understand why Barger *et al* got involved in the first place.

THE NIGHT OF THE STRANGLER (1972).

First off, I love The Monkees. So how could I pass up a rotgut horror pic starring Micky Dolenz? Lensed only a couple years after the pre-fab group's demise, his career nose-dived from sitcom super-stardom to this southern-fried foolishness, directed by Joy N. Houck Jr., who was also responsible for drive-in diarrhea like CREATURE FROM BLACK LAKE and NIGHT OF BLOODY HORROR. Oh, how quickly the Legends fall.

The over-ripe melodrama begins when Denise comes home to New Orleans from her "Yankee" college, pregnant and ready to wed a black man. Micky (still dressed and permed like he just stepped out of his long-dead TV show) plays her easy-going brother, Vance, while her older, richer brother Dan (James Ralston) begins seething that she let a "stinking degenerate nigger into her body," just to make sure you realize Dan's the bad guy, he's also courting Micky's old flame, and continually ribs him about it.

Enter a hippie nitwit (his rifle concealed in a guitar case) who offs Denise's future-hubbie, then Denise is drowned in her bathtub (and it's chalked up as a suicide). Even after the rectory sends Chuck Patterson, a young, hip black minister and an old pal of Vance's) to smooth things out, the murders continue—including a poisonous snake in a bouquet of flowers. Throughout, this amateurish, poverty-road swill is never afraid to flaunt its more lovably dim-witted plot twists.

Better still, Micky acts drunk (not a hard stretch, considering his now-infamous carousing at the time) starts a brawl in the middle of a (very threadbare) wedding, works at a flower shop, and has a scene in bed with a naked supporting bimbo. Unfortunately, every time Dolenz strives for a dramatic moment, you think it's suddenly going to segue into a HEAD-style parody. Without this resident Monkee, this would be little more than a ridiculous, C-grade thriller which flies from your memory with the velocity of a beer shit. Then again, even with Dolenz on board, it's isn't much more.

PATRICIA [Patricia: Einmal Himmel und Zurück] (VSoM; 1980).

There's nothing more painful than generic, European sexploitation, with its interchangeable young actors and cookie-cutter scripts. But this particular crock stars an unknown, 20-year-old actress named Anne Parillaud. Yes, a decade before achieving a modicum of international star-dom in LA FEMME NIKITA, she was paying her rent by playing the title role in this cheese, from EuroShit director Hubert Frank.

Patricia Cook (Parillaud) is a beautiful, wealthy (let's add ditzy) young woman who proudly boasts on TV that she "keeps in shape by make love." Her overworked corporate papa despises his daughter's promiscuous lifestyle, of course, which only widens the generation gap—as well as Patricia's shapely legs. But when Dad has a fatal heart attack, Patricia is left in the company of Harry Miller (Sascha Hehn), a studly race car gigolo who has to decide whether to (1) murder her and collect a fat fee, thanks to a mysterious phone call, or (2) fall in love with this free spirit, who needs to marry in order to keep the family fortune.

Parillaud is almost unrecognizable and, though barely out of her teens, willing to bare all for her art. Ever the consummate actress, she spends the movie pouting, flirting, and doffing her hideous early-'80s wardrobe (remember those multi-colored, striped knee socks? Yikes!). She flashes her

tits to get a ride when her car breaks down; signs onto a cheapo Hercules movie; and is chased by horny monks (she *was* running topless through their monastery, after all). In the steamiest episode, she even has a hot li'l lesbian tryst with her cousin "Pussy."

Though picturesque, the movie never escapes the fact it's just a series of disjointed sexcapades featuring a pack of spoiled brats tooling about Europe (though it *does* take a moment to allude to KING LEAR at the end). And despite her charmingly disposable wardrobe, Patricia is essentially just a vapid little tease. It's lucky that Luc Besson took a liking to Parillaud (that's putting it mildly, since he married her), thus saving the young actress from becoming just another EuroSlop sex kitten.

TALES FROM THE QUADEAD ZONE (1987).

Back in SC#3, I ripped into director Chester N. Turner's blindingly inept BLACK DEVIL DOLL FROM HELL. God help us all. I've finally tracked down director/writer/producer/editor Turner's follow-up, which proves that he didn't learn a damned thing in the three years between movies. He even performs the teeth-clenching theme song with (lemme guess...family member?) Keefe Turner. This guy is so singularly untalented that he makes you long for the rudimentary shittiness of a Tim Ritter movie.

Shirley Latanya Jones (who also starred in DEVIL DOLL), once again sacrifices all pride to be in front of Turner's camcorder. And you know this is going to be a class act when the very first scene has Jones washing the dishes, and her dialogue is drowned out by the clanking kitchenware. The Casio Organ soundtrack also makes much of the script unintelligible, which is probably a godsend, when you think about it.

Jones then reads a couple supernatural stories to the invisible ghost of her long-dead son, Bobby (portrayed by a floating coffee cup). In "Food for?", a white-trash, shack-living, dirt-poor family begins slaughtering their own kin when they get tired of fighting over the limited food on the dinner table. Next, Brothers steal a corpse from a funeral home, so the stiff's real-life brother can bury the guy in a clown suit. Of course, when the body comes back to life, we get a Black Zombie Clown From Hell (which is the funniest thing in the movie). Then, it's back to Shirley's story, as she knives her abusive beau (with a plastic, spring-loaded prop knife, shown in close-up), the cops arrive (in KMart sport shirts), and we get a heartwarming (and bloodthirsty) finale.

Though not as patently sexist and offensive as DEVIL DOLL, this is still pretty foul, and even at only 63 minutes, it feels longer than Andy Warhol's EMPIRE. It took raw chutzpah on Turner's part to even release this embarrassment, which is essentially one-man, one-take filmmaking at its worst. It'll leave you stunned (and *really* pissed off that didn't listen to me, when I told you to avoid this hunk of crap).

JOHNNY COOL (1963).

This Mob pic from executive producer Peter Lawford got an unexpected publicity boost, since it opened the same week Joe Valachi was making headlines for testifying at Senate investigations. What better time to release a flick about a Sicilian hitman (Henry Silva)? Even if it never rises about competent B-level fare, the supporting cast is bursting with future TV icons and low-grade Rat Packsters.

It certainly starts out cool enough, with Sammy Davis Jr. warbling the swinging Sammy Cahn theme song, and a 15 minute prologue set in the Old Country, where we watch young Giordano (a.k.a. Johnny Cool) grow up to be a village bigshot. But when things get too hot, he heads to America. Enter Elizabeth Montgomery, as a swanky NYC chanteuse named Dare Guiness, who meets Johnny in a cocktail lounge and immediately falls for the brooding lunk. The only glitch in their romance? Cool is on a cross-country vendetta against an assortment of Mob rivals. So with naive Elizabeth along for the joyride, he hops from New York, to Las Vegas, to Los Angeles, and back.

Along the way they encounter (or murder) Telly Savalas as a NYC mob boss, Mort Sahl as a Vegas henchman, Joey Bishop as a used car dealer, plus Jim Backus, Richard Anderson (THE SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN's Oscar Goldman) and Elisha Cook Jr. Plus, in a terrific scene, Silva crashes a crap game and meets eye-patched Sammy Davis Jr. as "Educated," a lucky roller (especially when he's got a gun pointed at his head). While the script makes a limp attempt to expose the Mob's hold on American business and politics, it's mostly just an excuse for some cheap thrills (when Montgomery is raped, Silva takes revenge) and a few unique assassination techniques—like riding window cleaning scaffolding to the target's highrise window, and blasting away with a machine gun.

William Asher brings the same lack of directorial finesse to this project as he did to his half-dozen Frankie & Annette Beach Party pics, and most of the acting is disposable too. Silva was never known for his relaxed, likable demeanor, and though he carved out a successful career playing sadistic supporting villains, when given an entire movie to carry, he's a stiff. And while the future BEWITCHED-starlet (not to mention, Mrs. Asher) adds some welcome window-dressing, she's far from the obsessed, morally-torn siren the script calls for. Complete with a surprisingly downbeat ending, this amoral little romp may not break any new ground in the gangland genre, but has enough moments to keep it memorable.

LUCKY THE INSCRUTABLE [Lucky, el Intrepido] (1967).

For the life of me, I can't fathom why director Jess Franco is so popular. His sex pics are spineless, his horror flicks are dry, and at best, he follows the old rule that if you crank out enough of anything, by sheer chance, something good will eventually emerge. Nevertheless, I continue to wander through his massive filmography, in hopes of stubbing my toe on the rare gem.

In the case of this colorful, campy spy film, I discovered one of his winners—and though the idea of a Jess Franco *comedy* sounds like a misprint at first, the guy pulls off one of the few Franco pics we're *supposed* to laugh at. Ray Danton stars in the title role, as a suave, international troubleshooter who's a mix between James Bondian charisma, Batman-level satire, and European greasiness. And though a self-proclaimed Master of Disguise, he's so pathetic at it (would you believe, dark glasses and a hat?) that everybody recognizes him in an instant.

Lucky's latest gig involves a secret society of financiers, who hire him to stop a counterfeiting ring, which takes him to Rome, Albania, and the Caribbean. But unlike 007's First-Class globe hopping, all of Lucky's destinations look more like Excursion Rate. While in pursuit of a Blofeld-type known as Mr. Gold Glasses, he's also chased by the army, captured by a beautiful female officer, and aided by his leather-jacked partner, Michael, who's equipped with a boxful of secret weapons.

The storyline is thoroughly silly, full of cut-rate perils, swooning babes and a parking lot crammed with spies who swap secrets with all the subtlety of a Lower East Side crack dealer. And despite Lucky's continual incompetence, he always acts like a cocky, know-it-all bastard. By the end, the story blissfully loses all traces of reality (in comparison, those Dean Martin/Matt Helm pics have all the harsh reality of a John Le Carré novel). Even if it's far from the artistic heights of MODESTY BLAISE or DANGER: DIABOLIK, this flick's loopiness is thoroughly contagious.

DEATH WISH CLUB (1982).

Don't let this twisted li'l pic's crude veneer fool you. It's often so compellingly bizarre that you can't believe director John Carr had the guts (or lack of common sense) to actually make it. Barely released on video in its complete form, it was later whittled down and included as one of the three episodes in the creaky anthology, NIGHT TRAIN TO TERROR. It's almost impossible to describe the dime store depths this wondrous pic achieves, but I'll try...

The tale begins at a two-bit carnival, where the sinister Mr. Youngmeyer lures a sultry popcorn girl named Greta (Meredith Haze) away from the carny; and next thing we know, she's a hard-boiled whore. A med student named Glen (Rick Barnes) then becomes obsessed when he sees this babe in a porno pic, seeks her out through the local leather fetish shop, and finds Greta playing piano in a swanky nightclub (oddly enough, without any pants on). He's also cautioned by the devilish (hint hint) Youngmeyer that she "lives in the fourth dimension, it's not a nice place there."

Despite the warning, Glen is soon shacking up with the insane and perpetually naked Greta, who's still making sex pics (her latest Mad Doctor nudie looks like SON OF KISS ME QUICK). And once he's emotionally entrenched, Greta takes Glen to the Death Wish Club—a circle of death fetishists who play deadly games, like unleashing a (ridiculously lame) poisonous winged beetle in the midst of their latest meeting, just for kick.

Things get *really* fucked up when Greta "dies" and then suddenly reappears in her nightclub band dressed up like a guy. It seems that this lovely fruitcake now thinks she's a (very unlikely) man named Charlie, and when Glen tries to come onto him/her, he's called a "fag." Never one to become discouraged when faced with totally lunacy, Glen decides to make friends with Charlie, and the two are soon cruising for broads together.

It's an endearingly horrible flick, packed with gender confusion, atrocious (but fearless) acting, absurd plotting, and over-ripe Ed Woodian dialogue. Plus you've gotta love a movie that incorporates flaming queers, midgets, and so much throwaway decadence that you can't break away, even if it means getting another beer. It even has the lovesick Glen breaking up a wedding between Charlie and a male transvestite! Last, but not least, Meredith Haze is a revelation, whether playing a woman or a man. Please tell me that's she's made more movies! Equipped with all the unfathomable rhythms that make a no-budget, cult classic, this is a newfound BadFilm fave.

SECRETS OF SEX [a.k.a. Erotic Tales From the Mummy's Tomb; Bizarre] (1969).

Anthony Balch is best remembered by cult movie addicts for TOWERS OPEN FIRE, his cinematic collage featuring William S. Burroughs. In addition, he brought EuroTrash to London theatres during the swinging '60s, and directed two wonderfully odd features; 1973's HORROR HOSPITAL and this mind-blowing sex flick, which boasts a supremely bizarre sense of humor.

Difficult to describe, yet hard to forget, this opens with groovy psychedelic credits, and a bandage-swaddled mummy as our narrator—who introduces us to a half-dozen vignettes, and promises to show us the "extremes" men and women go in their pursuit of sexual satisfaction. We also get a rapid-fire prologue featuring alluring guys and gals, assorted fetishware (undies, garters, thigh high boots), and best of all, half-naked go-go dancers pelted with rotten vegetables. In fact, this ten minute opening is so outrageous that the various tales seem tame by comparison.

One of the nastiest is right up front, with a famous female photographer hiring a male model to grace her mock-torture chamber. Of course, in order to properly "capture the mood," she has to actually torture the guy—even leaving him chained up while she goes out for a leisurely lunch. Others include a rich old fart with a wish to have a son, and his young mistress, who has a rare genetic disorder. A batty, middle-aged woman who has trapped the souls of past lovers in her hothouse plants. And a female burglar (sexy Cathy Howard) is apprehended by an under-pants'ed apartment owner, and has to rely on her feminine wiles.

The screwiest has a *very* desperate nerd hiring a leggy blonde call girl (Sue Bond) from a Girls-4-Rent phone number; only to scare her off when he wants his pet lizard to make it a threesome. The most stylish entry takes us on a comic, sexual misadventure with female secret agent Lindy Leigh (Maria Frost), who sneaks into an embassy to do some topless safecracking.

Balch has an eye for odd compositions, and even when tickling your fancy with grim delights, he knows when to stick in the delightfully incongruous moment (like in the middle of one segment, inserting a silent movie nudie pic homage). Of course, the curvaceous cast of hot young "pigeons" also helps immeasurably. Though laced with lurid attitude to spare, this is far from your normal maggot-flogging grindhouse slop. Sleazy sexploitation with a brain? What an original approach!

THE HUMANOID [L'Umanoide] (Luminous; 1979).

In the wake of STAR WARS' mega-box-office, there were plenty of cheesy, no-brainer knock-offs. This lumbering Pastaland space crock is one of the worst, though it might amuse a six-year-old (or someone so drunk they're as bright as a six-year-old). Besides, any film that proudly gives professional-behemoth Richard Kiel above-the-title billing is flaunting its incompetence. We also get several pseudonyms tossed into the credits, including director "George B. Lewis" (Aldo Lado) and special FX by "Anthony M. Dawson" (Antonio Margheriti). On top of all that, Ennio Morricone gets credit for the crapped-out-on-a-slow-afternoon score.

A lengthy opening scrawl informs us that Metropolis (formerly known as Earth) is in deep shit since the evil Lord Graal (Ivan Rassimov) is seeking revenge against his brother, the current, cut-rate ruler of the galaxy. And wait until you get a gander at this blatant Darth Vader knock-off and his black-garbed storm troopers. Or the glowing, Light Saber-esque weapons (in this case, they're shot like arrows from transparent bows). I can't believe Lucas didn't sue for every lira he could squeeze out of them! Of course, by not even acknowledging this trash, he allowed it to become the virtually-unknown, barely-released item it is today.

A bearded Kiel turns up as the gentle giant Golob, who gabs to his beeping 'n' buzzing robo-dog, while Barbara Bach (THE SPY WHO LOVED ME) is the beautiful bitch, Lady Agatha, who's kept eternally young (and with an eternally bad wig) by the twisted scientist Kraspin (Arthur Kennedy, who's a *long* way from his Tony-winning performance as Biff in DEATH OF A SALESMAN).

Things get even dumber when Kiel's ship is grounded by Kraspin and he's transmuted into a deadly "Humanoid"—at which time his beard disappears, he growls a lot, and tosses stuntmen about, as pink ray-gun-beams bounce off his big ol' mutant chest. Forced to follow Kraspin's bidding, he attacks a Good Guy desert fortress and goes after heroine Corinne Clery (another 007-refugee, who appeared in MOONRAKER). Luckily, Clery's telepathic Asian pupil reaches into Kiel's "soul" and turns him back into an immense, goofy friend.

This is numbingly saccharine sci-fi. But (if I want to scrape for a compliment) it's fun to watch Kiel busting his way through (obviously) fake walls, while adults will be momentarily awakened by some quick but nasty sadism.

Even that's not enough to take your mind off the immense matte lines, plastic spaceships, and general ineptitude in the FX department. Still, if taken in the right spirit (drink a trough of beer beforehand), this might keep you *barely* entertained. It certainly worked in my case.

THE NAUGHTY CHEERLEADER [a.k.a. How did a Nice Girl Like You Get Into This Business?] (SWV; 1970).

This flick is a dull, international dud. But where else can you find a movie that pairs longtime Playboy princess Barbie Benton with Klaus Kinski?! Of course, if you're a connoisseur of Kinski's career, you won't be too surprised—because although he's best known for his brooding Herzog pics, this guy cranked out loads of fly-by-night hackwork. Hell, this German production even rounded up old farts like Broderick Crawford and Lionel Stander for brief, pathetic walk-ons.

Writer/director Will Tremper pours on the limp comic-melodrama, with Barbie as Lynn Keefe, who explains how a teenage majorette escaped from middle-class Scranton and used her body to claw her way to the top, over the next three years. Complete with a plaid schoolgirl skirt and bows in her hair (in a sorry attempt to make her look like a naive teen), she loses her virginity to a local romeo while riding his motorcycle. From there, her story spastically hops from the Catskills, to Philadelphia, Boston and Miami Beach, with the melodrama piled on like fertilizer—as Barbie deals with pregnancy, lovers, college, and her boundless stupidity.

Things get wackier (but alas, no better) when she earns a c-note from Stander for a quick fuck on a bus and is screwed over (figuratively *and* literally) by a record producer. Then Barbie catches the eye of scam-artist Kinski (at his goofiest), who sets up this "delicious girl" as a fake Miss Luxembourg, and pimps her out to horny old men who want to screw a beauty queen. Along the way, Crawford plays a blustery Texas oil man who brings his shy son in for a schtupp, a 21-year-old Ed Begley Jr. is seen briefly as a lascivious bellhop, and even Hugh Hefner makes a cameo appearance.

These Kraut producers spent a bundle trucking this turd around the world, even stopping in Monte Carlo. It's too bad they didn't spend any dough on getting a real actress, because even if wide-eyed Barbie looks the part of a young tease, they shouldn't have let her open her mouth (to talk, that is). After ten minutes, I wanted to chop her up and stuff her in a trunk. But let's not totally fault Barbie, because even without her lifeless presence, this tame trash lacks the backbone to be anything more than instantly forgettable swill.

GOD IS MY WITNESS [Khuda Gawah] (Scarecrow Video; 1992).

Like many films from India, this combines action-packed adventure, historical drama and a love story into an all-singing, all-dancing Hindi extravaganza. Sounds silly? Far from it. This Bollywood mega-epic from director Mukul Anand left me limp with its over-the-top, out-of-its-mind passion and excess. And despite its 193 minute running time, this generation-spanning saga *moves*. It also stars Amitabh Bachchan, India's biggest star and most recognizable face, known for his "angry young man" persona and who, from '69 to the present, made over 90 movies—often appearing in up to nine films in a year!

The story begins in Afghanistan, with warrior king Badshah Khan (Bachchan) falling madly in love with the sultry Benazir (Sridevi) from the competing clan. But the only way she'll marry him (and unite their people) is if he goes to India and brings back the head of Habibullah, who killed her father. So off he rides, on a high-powered, obsessive quest to locate a man who's *somewhere* in India.

Meanwhile, check out these astounding musical numbers, which burst outta nowhere, and can feature dozens of saber-brandishing soldiers and Benazir's migraine-inducing vocals. The script is crammed to the sprocket holes with plot twists, rousing action sequences and Badshah's unwavering sense of honor. He's unjustly accused of murder and sent to prison; Benazir going batty; their children grow up, and are also pulled into the fray. In other news, Habibullah's evil brother, Pasha, is out for revenge. And that's only the barest bones of the story.

This is all set in the 20th century too, but that's impossible to tell until Badshah hits civilization, an hour into the movie. Plus, the flick's modern-day second half is laced with drug smuggling, a race car rally, jazzy stuntwork, and even more of those wacky song 'n' dances. Plus, everybody in this film is so intense (particularly, the Amazing Bachchan) that I'm surprised the videotape didn't explode inside my VCR. Letterboxed and with highlighted subtitles, this is a revelation—combining the scope and grandeur of a David Lean masterwork with all the melodrama of an entire season of MELROSE PLACE.

TRIP WITH THE TEACHER (1975).

What was sexploitation auteur Zalman King doing to pay the rent before cranking out softcore, high-gloss rotgut like TWO MOON JUNCTION and RED SHOE DIARIES? Starring in '70s weirdness such as BLUE SUNSHINE, playing Jesus in THE PASSOVER PLOT, and energizing this by-the-numbers, drive-in degeneracy with his creepy charisma.

A mini-schoolbus (the type usually reserved for drooling, crayon-eaters) is taking a quartet of high school girls and their pretty young teacher (Brenda Fogarty) to some Navajo ruins, but their field trip goes straight to hell when they run into a shaggy-haired biker named Al (Zalman), his brother and a 'nice guy' stranger. This cycle trio begins flirting with the busload of chicks, and when their bus breaks down in the middle of nowheresville, the bikers tow 'em to a deserted shack.

Uh oh. This is when Zalman begins to boil, with all the brooding, brain-damaged intensity of a young Cassavetes—barely cracking a smile throughout the entire film and sporting wicked, wraparound shades. And once trapped, the gals are put through the usual, misogynistic mindgames, with Zalman ripping Teacher's clothes off and raping her. Of course, if the script had made these schoolgirls a little less helpless, they could easily kick Zalman's weaselly li'l ass, instead of waiting around to be individually abused.

Meanwhile, Zalman spits up a classic exploitation performance. This guy is a fourth-rate, unshaven, mumbling moron (a la early Mickey Rourke). He crushes an old codger under a car for dribbling gasoline on his bike. He experiences brain seizures, which have him rolling on the ground, clutching his greasy head. And when he's killing somebody it looks more like he's having a *really* painful orgasm. Boy, this guy is great, and he's the only real actor within camera range.

Unfortunately, while Zalman is a stellar scumball, everything surrounding him lacks the same deranged edge, and once the script falls into its traditional spiral, it leaves Zalman with less time for his anti-social schtick. Despite all the proper ingredients (catfights, high-speed chases, nudity), director/writer Earl Barton drops the ball at every opportunity—resulting in drive-in dreck that promises more than it delivers. Still, it's worth it for another hilarious chapter in Zalman's ever-sleazier cinematic legacy.

FALLEN ANGELS (1985).

This feature length documentary promises to be "the reality behind the fantasies" of the porno world. That's putting it mildly. Far from a high-gloss P.R. profile or (at the other end of the spectrum) a moralistic diatribe, this ends up a cynical and depressing glimpse into mid-'80s adult movies, the Lost Girls who appear in them, and the allure of Hollywood stardom at its skankiest. Produced by Wendy Apple, Richard Lerner and Greg Brown, the film is firmly R-rated and is broken into three distinct segments.

It starts with the lowest rungs of the porno ladder, at a Figure Modeling Agency who finds low-grade, nude photo gigs for their gals, and lets us watch a cattle call audition. Half the time, it's hilarious, reveling in low-level scum and the ditzy, star-eyed girls. The rest of the time, it's simply sad, especially when

the women frankly discuss how they have to lie to their boyfriends, have been outed to their families, and endure it for only one reason—the money. A highlight is watching a (pre-porno fame) Bruce Seven filming a grungy sex loop. How does he prepare for a shoot? He gets laid the night before, so he won't be too horny. And the guy actually refers to his shitty li'l videos as an "educational source" for how to make love? Ego, much?

The second part takes an upscale turn, with a look at the filming of the feature-length CAUGHT FROM BEHIND II, featuring the ubiquitous Ron Jeremy. This is the most purely entertaining segment, with the male lead, Eric Edwards, discussing the difficulty of capturing cum shots; the lead actress divulging her real profession as a call girl; and the film taken to court, due to its backdoor motif.

Finally, bringing the film full circle, we re-encounter Kimberly, an Asian beauty who was one of the penniless models from the first segment. It's now 18 months later, and she's a high-profile, adult-movie starlet with the pseudonym Kristan Barrington. We even watch her attending the premiere of her latest epic, the now-classic NEW WAVE HOOKERS...Of course, we also check in on some of the other ladies who were there at the beginning, and have *really* hit rock bottom.

This virtually-forgotten pic digs into the mindset of the porno industry with a cool (but razored) edge. For many viewers, the most nostalgic moment will be a visit to a porno video store, complete with pathetic and/or loathsome customers, and a brief shot of a new Traci Lords tape still on the shelf. Chock full of tawdry insights for fans interested in the minutia of the porn industry, this terrific exploration of The Wide World of Smut has just enough depth to keep non-believers interested too.

MAYA (Luminous; 1988).

This Italian production was lensed in English, shot in Venezuela (posing as Mexico) and opens with a quote by Carlos Castaneda. So far, so goofy. Unfortunately, director Marcello Avallone (THE QUEER AND THE EROTIC, SPECTERS) never makes this anything more than compellingly awful supernatural hokum. It's too bad, because it's obvious he had a bit of cash to work with, but he should've started by chucking the script out of the plane window while over the Atlantic. It's a mess.

The story begins with William Berger as Silvak, a scientist studying a Mayan pyramid. When he ends up dead, after an encounter with a frizzy-haired feral girl, his grieving daughter (Manella Valentini) tries to solve the mystery and enlists the aid of her pop's old pal, a low-life gigolo played by Peter Phelps. As more unsolved, ritualistic murders turn up, could they all be connected to an ancient Mayan legend that an 8th century King and the God of Death are going to someday return? Well, there's *some* kind of pesky invisible force at work, emerging from ordinary mirrors (since it's "the evil that reflects in each one of us"). Unfortunately, Avallone pads out the slaughter with a dreary romance, jealousy and all the usual emotional horseshit.

The leads are thoroughly lame, and personally, my favorite characters were a pair of drunk, punk, double-digit-I.Q.'ed Americans, who cross the border for some cheap thrills (including a near-rape). There's also some high-energy local color, including a cockfight and an exorcism (with the subject vomiting up mouthfuls of snakes). At least Avallone pocks the movie with cheap T&A and gnarly FX, including a loving close-up of a nose getting crushed and split, a finger snapped off, and hooks ripping at flesh.

Still, the grue is usually kept on the backburner, because Avallone is too busy wrestling with the incomprehensible plot; as our Great White Hero saves the day during a Celebration of the Dead, which takes place around the pyramid. It's brainless, mercifully fast-paced, but ultimately disappointing, since Avallone rarely picks up on the story's more surreal possibilities and seems content to simply crank out another half-witted horror pic.

BLACK SAMSON (Warner Brothers; 1974).

When a relatively unknown '70s blaxploitation pic like this can get a release on legit home video, you know there's hope for the industry after all. And even if this urban ditty lacks the muscular star power of a Grindhouse God like Williamson or Brown, stuntman-turned-director Charles "Chuck" Bail (CLEOPATRA JONES AND THE CASINO OF GOLD) keeps it fast-paced and goofy enough to amuse even a jaded addict like myself.

Rockne Tarkington stars Samson, a dashikied nightclub owner who keeps a fully grown lion chained behind the bar, and doesn't take any shit when Whitey wanders into his club and tries to buy the services of his topless dancer. He simply "Samsonizes" the creep by whacking him with his huge fuckin' tribal staff and dumping him in the gutter. Samson is the hero of his hood since he "keeps all the honky motherfuckers off the streets," and although Tarkington isn't your normal action hero, he's got a solid, serious presence, which gives his role an additional heft.

Samson has his hands full when he runs up again the always-welcome, slimebag machismo of William Smith, as a mobster who wants to push his way into the neighborhood. From then on, Bail leaves reality at the door and piles on the action, with Samson obviously following the motto 'Dress loud and carry a big stick.' Things get hairier when Smith's g.f. Connie Strickland (BUMMER) infiltrates Samson's joint as a topless dancer ("That white girl's almost got rhythm," a customer comments. The optimum word is "almost."); Samson's immense-afro'ed squeeze, Carol Speed (ABBY [SC=5]) is kidnapped; and Samson finally goes bugfuck---taking on the entire Mob single-handedly. Meanwhile, Smith tosses "nigger loving bitch" Strickland out of a moving car and coats every act of aggression with a shit-eating grin. Is it any wonder the guy is one of the all-time greats?

The fun is capped with a terrific finale that has an entire urban street banding together to take on the Mob, complete with Brothers repelling down tenement walls and a hand-to-hand finale between the two muscular protagonists. Sure, it's ridiculous and lacking the subtext of the genre's best. But it sure is damned entertaining. Energized by Smith's shitheel performance and Bail's wild pacing, this is an unsung gem that'll win you over.

THE GREAT SILENCE [Il Grande Silenzio] (Luminous; 1968).

A couple issues ago, I gushed about the joys of Sergio Corbucci's slaughter-laced spaghetti-western, DJANGO. Here's another shoot 'em up from the late great director; different in tone, equally extraordinary and virtually ignored in the States. And while DJANGO reveled in mud and blood, this stark tale of sadistic bounty hunters and their prey is set in the wintry mountains of Utah.

Jean-Louis Trintignant stars as Silence ("They call him Silence, because wherever he goes, the silence of death follows."), a mute stranger who only kills in self-defense. In other cases, he simply blows off men's thumbs, so they can't shoot back. But in these trigger-happy days, everybody has to die sometime. Klaus Kinski co-stars in the tasty role of the lead bounty hunter, Loco, who gunns down a wanted man in front of his gray-haired mother and considers it his "patriotic duty to exterminate" the wayward soldiers hiding up in the mountains. Things get more complex when Kinski, his trio of frozen corpses and Silence are all deposited in a rinky-dink town named Snow Hill. Then newly-widowed Vonetta McGee (BLACULA) hires Silence to avenge the murder of her hubbie by Loco. Of course, along the way we get the expected flashbacks as to why Silence is so damned quiet, and why he hates bounty hunters so much.

Though Trintignant lacks charisma, he does have an appropriately distant look, while Kinski is at his weaseliest (which is saying a *lot*). Unfortunately, the

English language dubbing leaves plenty to be desired—especially the twangy guy who did Klaus' voice. Most of the supporting characters are total scum, whether it's the sleazebag lawmen (isn't that a redundant term?), the pathetic, starving wanted men (who'll steal a man's horse, in order to *eat* it), or your basic, unwashed vermin who blow their nose on their jacket.

In addition, this flick must've been hell to film, since it's constantly snowing and looks piss-freezing cold. Still, Silvano Ippoliti (MADAM KITTY) comes through with some gorgeous, snow-caked photography. And guess who did the music? Yes, the ubiquitous Ennio Morricone (it's no surprise to learn the guy's composed over 350 scores). Though it lacks the visceral punch of DJANGO, this is still a cruel, amoral treat, mixing mercenaries and murder.

MR. NO LEGS [a.k.a. The Amazing Mr. No Legs] (197?).

This low-grade, no-brain, cops 'n' crooks fodder has all the finesse of a grindhouse STARSKY AND HUTCH on laudanum. But it's also got a kickass twist, in a hitman played by real-life double amputee Ron Slinker, who tools around town in a wheelchair that has double-barreled shotguns concealed in the arm rests. Cool! Unfortunately, Slinker is the only reason to check out this crime muddle, directed by Ricou Browning (whose only other 'major' credit is SALTY, a '73 kid-flick starring Clint Howard and a pet sea lion).

When one of Slinker's drug-dealing flunkies accidentally kills his moralizing girlfriend, Ron and his henchman (Rance Howard, father to Ron and Clint, and proud owner of Comb-over of the Year) make it look like an overdose; but her cop brother doesn't buy it. He gets depressed, he gets drunk, then he links up with plainclothes detective Richard Jaeckel, who helps investigate her death. While we're on the subject of two-bit character actors, Lloyd Bochner also turns up as D'Angelo, the local drug kingpin.

The cover-up plot just keeps getting messier, with corpse stealing, crooked cops, backstabbing crooks, plus a lovingly-dopey nightclub catfight that's iced with a midget, a transvestite, and broken bottles to the gut. Whenever it sticks to the fuzz and their problems though, this is interminable sludge. At least Slinker keeps rolling in, while trying to take over the entire syndicate. He's great, and who cares if the guy can't act? Neither can the rest of the cast, but at least Slinker can kick ass with his Stump Fu. It's too bad the guy isn't in the film more.

Instead we get sledgehammer morality, minimalist production values, and acting that makes a Rudy Ray Moore flick look like Oscar material. Any highlights are attributable to either Slinker's take-no-survivors attitude, or the pic's unceasing ineptitude. For a prime example of the later, check out the hilariously vomitable nightclub duo (friends of the producer, methinks?). It's hard to believe there'll ever be films like this again, since only a 42nd Street-style grindhouse full of doped-up, brain-fried patrons would have the gall to run this type of pathetic, sadistic time-waster.

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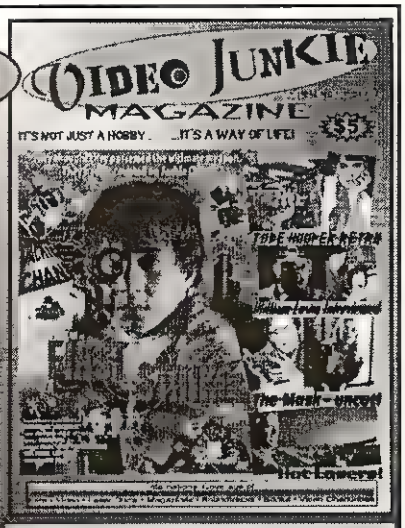

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UNDERGROUND ODDITIES

For people unfamiliar with Farley Mowat (in other worlds, non-Canadians), he's an acclaimed Canadian nature writer, best known to filmgoers for the movie NEVER CRY WOLF, which was based on his book. Sounds like an innocent sort, eh? Nope, that's only a front, and the terror that lurks beneath his scraggly beard is finally exposed in **FARLEY MOWAT ATE MY BROTHER (Ken Hegan, Suite A, 3020 West 3rd Avenue, Vancouver, BC V6K 1N1, Canada)**. Thank god Ken Hegan had the guts to expose the truth in this hilarious short film. Ken narrates and stars, lovingly postulating that Canada's most famous nature writer was not only responsible for eating his missing brother, Tony, but to make matters worse, used the leftovers for an Inuit drum skin Based on a radio play by Hegan (others include ANNE MURRAY IS STALKING ME, while the film version of WILLIAM SHATNER LENT ME HIS HAIRPIECE is in the final editing stages), the viewer is shocked by the turbulent tale of how Tony, after writing a disparaging letter to "crank old fool" Mowat, was invited to Farley's tundra home and was never seen again Obviously, another victim of this "Kilted Killer." Hegan also crams his seven rapid fire minutes with fun facts about this nutcase-author, like how he once threatened to steal an atomic bomb and detonate it in America, as well as Mowat's somnambulistic effect on generations of Canuck school kids forced to endure his long winded books. If you haven't gotten the message yet, I loved this film A blissfully satiric short, which combines inventive filmmaking with a hilarious gift for the absurd. Only in Canada could a story this strange and disturbing be *true!!!*

The feature-lengthed **NIAGARAVATION (Panola Productions, 48 First Place, Brooklyn, NY 11231)** is a playful homage to old-fashioned, sci-fi schlock. The time is 1961, and a pair of average, middle-class Brooklyn honeymooners (director Joe Romano and producer Maria Newsom) head to Niagara Falls, only to find themselves in the midst of a none-too-subtle alien invasion led by blue-skinned alien "knob-heads" from the planet Humidor, who plan on stealing the earth's water. Aided by the ghosts of "suicidal lovers and careless tourists" who live under The Falls, this pic is more often a catalog of kitsch—complete with retro-bowling alleys, soda jerks and ugly eyeglasses. There's even an alien telethon to raise money for the Earth Invasion (a good idea which is soon beaten to death). Surprisingly well shot for a home-brewed item, with extensive location footage and a large cast of cheezily-costumed aliens, this indie runs hot on its imagination and high spirits. Plus it's great to see horror host emeritus Zacherle as the narrator, who adds a touch of dementia (in a priest's outfit, wouldya believe?), but disappears all too quickly. Sticking close to its '50s roots, it avoids the '90s fail-safe of cheap sex or gore, in order to take a nearly G-rated route. These space shenanigans also need some severe editing of the dead air, and for all its ambition, never transcends its self-conscious, indie roots. Still, the plot has as much credibility as anything in ID4, but at least *these* filmmakers set out to be ridiculous in the first place.

I can't imagine a more mind numbing, hilarious portrait of New Jersey White Trashiness than **MIDDLETOWN (Philip Botti, 33 Day Return Policy Productions, 17 Brisbane Hill Drive, Colt's Neck, NJ 07722)**, in which director Philip Botti—a self-proclaimed "filmmaker who's never made a film"—takes The Wiz up on their (now defunct) video camera's free, 33-day "test drive." The result is this 48 minute movie chronicling his home town of Middletown, New Jersey, and a motley assortment of morons and pals (often, they're both). There's the Wolf Man, a musclebound lunk who considers himself the ultimate ladies' man, and is all too happy to dance in his g-string for the camera Sweet Lou Fulgoni is on his way to jail for ten days, since he keeps driving without a license. B.J., "Middletown's #1 sex-crazed son," shows off his adult magazine collection. There's even a visit to Tequila Body Shot Night at some local hole named Chubby's. But without question, the most terrifying specimen is Sweet Lou's brother Ray, a talk show fanatic who loves to watch "stupid-ass hicks and their fucked-up redneck lives" or "fat bitches," and grabs the spotlight since "he had nothing to do." Highpoints include his obsession with ex-hometown boy Geraldo Rivera and Ray's transformation into a crazed skinhead. This pic proudly boasts the funniest, ugliest aspects of suburban scum Secure in its observations and never afraid of a cheap gag, this is a terrific film which actually makes you believe that there are losers this screwed up, lurking in the wilds of New Jersey I just hope they stay there.

If there's one California pop icon who has all the makings of a hilarious documentary, it's kitsch queen **ANGELYNE (World Artists Home Video)**, who's spent the last decade shamelessly self-promoting her cantilevered charms on LA billboards. Unfortunately, this half-hour portrait fails because directors Robinson Devor and Michael Guccione actually seem to admire this Bimbo—preferring to have her strut and pose for their camera, instead of exposing her for the Decline of Civilization that she actually represents. It wouldn't have been hard, since the gal has the I.Q. of a cowpie and is one of the few people on the planet who could make Jennifer Tilly look like a nuclear engineer. Along the way, we also meet the pathetic people in her life, including her deep-pocketed backer (who can't refuse her "hypnotic ways") and the prez of her Fan Club. Worst of all is an obsessive Swedish fan who collects all of her merchandise (hair, used clothing...You just *know* this creepy loser has a bronzed maxipad somewhere in his apartment) and finally gets to meet his idol in person. Limp and uninspired, this vapid ditz deserves a more insightful profile; or better still, a meat ax to her styrofoam head. Personally, I hope she's doing the same sorry schtick when she's fifty —now *there's* a movie I'd like to see.

Adam Davis' hilarious **KILLING TIME (Fist Productions, 339 E. 12th Street, Apt.17, NY, NY 10003)** is an ode to urban sociopaths, featuring a pair of scraggly deadbeats who ture of vegging out to late nite TV and decide to spice up their life by killing someone. Better still, these guys are total imbeciles, and Davis revels in that fact, turning them into Thrill Killers with the combined I Q of a bag of Cheetos. Director/writer Davis stars as Tex, while Todd Phillips (director of the fave G.G.Allin documentary, HATED) tests out his acting chops in front of the camera, as Weasel. Both characters are all too familiar to any East Village resident. Of course, killing somebody is a major endeavor for these "20-nothings," who're so confused that even a simple rooftop lunch of sardines and processed cheese slices is a mini adventure. But after much careful deliberation (re: smoke a bowl and chug a 40), these mental midgets decide to snuff a homeless bum, which leads to a raucous blast of black comedy. Though never as wholeheartedly deviant as it could've been, this half-hour murder romp hits a successful balance between the comic and the criminal. But what sets it apart from most underground films is the high style of its filmmaking. Imaginatively shot and edited, it utilizes time lapse photography, jump cuts, and plenty of slick film school technique to solid, subversive use. Plus, you've gotta love a movie whose music ranges from "In a Gadda Da Vidda" to "Dueling Banjos." KILLING TIME is a terrific directorial debut, with more laughs than all of CLERKS and HENRY, PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL KILLER combined

GUTTER 9 ($18 ppd. to Mike Tsaros, 1740 Mulford Ave. Apt. 10-G, Bronx, NY 10461) is a 21 minute video by Mike Black and Scot Free. And though anyone in their right mind would be quick to complain about its wobbly, home-shot look, what else can you expect when you've got a 10-dollar budget and a one-take, 6-hour shooting schedule? OK, so it ain't Stanley Kubrick. It ain't even Richard Kern, for that matter. But it does start out with a guy in a Tor Johnson mask sitting on the toilet, holding the hand drawn title card and smoking a fat stogie. Then we meet a guy sitting on his bed, flipping through a girlie mag, but it seems he prefers getting off by watching PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE (hey, doesn't everybody?). And what do you know, suddenly Tor is in his bedroom, in person, happily going down on the guy. Essentially, this is a jaw dropping homage to those old nudie-loops, where a fabulous fantasy babe suddenly appears in a guy's bedroom—only in this case, we get Mr. Beast of Yucca Flats himself! Yes, it's the first (and only?) Tor Johnson fetish flick, complete with our Tor stand-in dancing to Bo Diddley's "Who Do You Love?" with his dick hanging out of his pants. In terms of technique, the pic is unapologetically inept, with long, static takes that make the earliest Warhol look like John Woo. Though abrasive, indulgent and overlong, you've gotta admit that the filmmakers' voyeuristic deviance probably would've made Ed Wood proud. [Note: the video also comes complete with 100 minutes of "trailers and other cool shit", tagged at the end.]

If you live in a major city, you can't help but notice the stenciled face of 7'4", 520 pound, wrestling icon, Andre the Giant gracing light poles, pasted on buildings, et cetera. It's everywhere. And **ANDRE THE GIANT HAS A POSSE ($12 from Alternative Graphics, 410 Angell Street, Providence, RI 02906)** is an amazing, 16-minute tribute to the power (and silliness) of guerrilla media manipulation. A tale so strange it shouldn't be true. But it is . It kicks off by subversively manipulating the usual FBI: WARNING to its own ends (freeze frame it for a great opening laugh), and then shows us how a simple Skate Kid joke suddenly turned into a worldwide occurrence. From its almost accidental origin, to its sudden, plague-like results—with Andre's bloated visage turning up at Graceland, Jim Morrison's grave, and even vandalizing political campaign posters. Director Helen Stickler tracks down Shepard Fairey, the creator of the Andre craze, who admits "you can't really dislike it, because it's so stupid," while offering it up as an exercise in phenomenology. There are also interviews with ordinary folks who've had a brush with Andre's Greatness, bands who leap on the Andre bandwagon, and examples of corporate Amerika trying to usurp the idea. It's terrific...In addition, the video includes the 33-minute long **ATTENTION DEFICIENCY DISORDER** from directors Shepard Fairey and Ryan Lesser, which features overlapping footage of the Andre phenom, loads of wild Skate Kid footage and ingeniously manipulated film clips.

You know you're entering Rotgut Territory when a flick doesn't waste any time before flashing some bare tits Welcome to **TERROR OF BLOOD GYM (Christopher Michael, 2260 N. Cahuenga Blvd. Suite 306, Los Angeles, CA 90068)**, starring "the incredible edible Kirsty Waay," while director Christopher Michael plays "The Creeper," a subtle, multi-faceted...ahhh...he's actually a fuckin' pathetic villain. A muscular phantom who's an unlikely "Disciple of Death" at a cut-rate gym, and is ordered by his Master (also played by Michael) to get his "big funky butt" in gear and start slaughtering the patrons. For 29 sleazy minutes, whenever some preening idiot enters the gym, we get to watch them (mercifully) killed, with lots of fake blood spattered on the wall (via squirt bottles, is my guess). He crushes one guy's neck during a barbell bench press, turns up the heat on a lovely lass' sauna, and the prurient highlight is a lengthy shower scene (Ms. Waay), with The Creeper as a drooling voyeur. And when he isn't murdering, he looks like a pumped-up wino—guzzling vodka from a liter bottle and digging through trash cans Looking for subtlety? Look elsewhere! Michael always goes for the cheapest gag, and is damned proud of it, whether it involves big dicks, watermelon eating, or "Winchester Cathedral." Admittedly, there's little point to any of this crude nonsense, and Michael probably puts more creative energy into it than the material deserves—particularly, a short (but lovingly bloodthirsty) animated sequence with dolls. Still, it's a lot of cheesy fun for people aren't embarrassed to laugh at shit they'll (probably) regret enjoying the next morning

The late Al Adamson was, arguably, one of the kings of insufferable drive-in crapola, and **AL ADAMSON: DRIVE-IN MONSTER (Chad Sisneros, 3204 Glenwood Place, Falls Church, VA 22041, e-mail: ChadNMI@aol.com)** is a cool, 21-minute tribute to his bumpy career. Completed just before his murder, this features plenty of wild clips from Al's motley filmography (mostly culled from trailers), plus interviews with Al himself, long-time producer Sam Sherman, cameraman Gary Graver, plus supporting actors John "Bud" Cardos and John Bloom. Their recollections include Al's initial success with SATAN'S SADISTS, explanations of how he pieced together DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN, and loads of hilarious, budget cutting anecdotes—like how Adamson gave Col. Sanders a cameo in HELL'S BLOODY DEVILS in exchange for providing food throughout the shoot. Just imagine how happy the crew was to be fed KFC, three times a day, for three solid weeks! Refreshingly, both Sam and Al admit that many of their films were crap, but this documentary also puts their body of work in perspective; explaining that they were churning out the same type of schlock as their peers, but on one tenth the budget. Whether you're a fan of Adamson's or not, this is a well-crafted, very entertaining eulogy. My only complaint is that I wish it could've been stretched to feature length, since Adamson's behind-the-scenes tales are more fun than actually sitting through any of his movies.

THE INVINCIBLE KUNG FU GUY (Will Martin, P.O. Box 12656, Berkeley, CA 94712-3656; $12.50 plus $3 shipping) is a silly, frighteningly accurate take-off of all those badly-dubbed HK martial arts pics which used to pockmark late night TV, long before their current status as *genre du jour*. It's even framed like a Late Late Show entry. Writer/director/star Will Martin must've overdosed on these pics as a kid, because he's got it down pat, including the lame fight sound effects, ridiculous reaction shots, grainy film stock, and inept looping. But unlike most of those '70s chopsocky pics, this one has a plot (well, sorta). It begins when a white-haired villain steals a bagful of Tiger Herb (the cure for Dragon Fever) and kills the courier; then our Invincible Kung Fu Guy hero sets out to avenge his dead brother and save the ailing village. This is rather obvious comic territory, of course, since most early Chinese action pics are funny enough on their own (especially after a few beers). In addition, the leads look like they couldn't defend themselves against a petulant Girl Scout, much less a Kung Fu Master, while displaying the saddest, slowest fight choreography on record. A fun idea, but even at a scant 23 minutes, the idea gets a little long winded. Also in the works from Martin. ESTUARY HOUNDS, which hopes to do to Tarantino's R.DOGS what he does to every no-bit chunk of kung foolery in KUNG FU GUY.

Eric Brummer's JOANNA DIED AND WENT TO HELL (Eric Brummer, 3312 B Barham Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90069; $13) is a Super 8 horror nightmare. Part One of the proposed Hell Babes series, this 11-minute, $250 pic is a brief but totally tripped-out yarn which displaces its lack of any real script with enough cheap thrills to keeps you wanting more. This is the pithy tale of Joanna (Windy O'Reilly), a cute brunette who gets kidnapped by "Dark Strangers" and wakes up nearly naked, bound and gagged in Hell (actually it looks more like a nicely dressed apartment). A masked sadist pops out of a walk-in closet, and when the opportunity arises, she breaks free, puts on some clothes (shucks!) and grabs a handy gun (yeah!) Short 'n' sleazy, this wins you over with its rancid sense of humor and some lovably repellent stop-motion animation. At its best, JOANNA has a wicked, EVIL DEAD LITE sensibility, complete with nicely-sculpted corpses scattered about the set, and a cackling, winged skull flapping about. Energetic and unpretentious, its half baked bravado keeps it firmly on track. Next up in the series: DEBBIE DOES DAMNATION.

NEW RELEASES

To put it simply, David Cronenberg's latest outing, **CRASH (1996)**, makes DEAD RINGERS and NAKED LUNCH look warm 'n' fuzzy This icy excursion into obsession is prime Cronenberg; and is likely to send all but the most foolhardy fans into a fugue state before the midpoint After a car accident leaves him stitched, pinned and hospitalized, James Spader is sucked into the weird world of Auto Fetishism Holly Hunter rips loose as the survivor from the other car, who screws Spader and goes along for the ride. Then there's Elias Koteas; awesome as a sleazy fuck who's obsessed with car-induced injuries and reenacts celeb fatalities for the local auto sickos. Meshing the erotic and the alienated, this is loaded with doggie-style sex, hand-jobs, fondling of twisted metal, scar tissue sensuality, car chases posing as sexual gamesmanship, and sequences that'll turn you on, even as they turn your stomach Imagine Zalman King meets General Motors, all filtered through Cronenberg's darkest, most uncommercial sensibilities. It's no wonder that its U.S. distributor, Fine Line, is shitting their pants How do you promote it? A Feel-Lousy film about a AutoErotic freak who gets his rocks off on open wounds? Yes sirree, Cronenberg is back, calmly plumbing the depths of dementia, as only he can.

The brightest news for hardcore Troma fans is the completion of their latest epic, which revels in the type of brain damaged humor which made them great. Yes, it's **TROMEO AND JULIET (1996)**, one of the strangest pics to ever spring from their fetid imagination. And believe it or not, they even tell a (semi)coherent story, with a couple honest-to-goodness actors mixed in amongst their predictably freakish supporting cast. If you're bored with Shakespeare snooze fests, never fear; this puts the Bard through a Cuisinart, and laces their modern-day tale of star-crossed lovers with tattoos, lesbians, a monster penis, leaking brains, dismembered limbs, shameless self promotion, more piercings than a weekend on the Lower East Side, and loads of deviant laughs. It's the tale of two feuding NYC families, whose patriarchs, Cappy Capulet and Monty Que, were once partners in the porno film biz. Nowadays, Cappy is a rich bastard, Monty is a continually-farting drunk, and they hate each other's guts. But the moment their offspring (Will Keenan and Jane Jensen) meet, the pic reeks of true love. Will the shy, sensitive Tromeo (who masturbates to CD-roms like "The Merchant of Penis") save the vegan Juliet from marrying the geeky heir of Meat World? It's even narrated by Lemmy (from the "House of Motorhead"), as he loiters about Times Square. TROMEO is a four-star TroMasterwork. A sick and demented gem, with a total disregard for good taste which reminds me of John Waters' earliest works.

WILD SIDE (Evergreen; 1995) is a mess, but I'll check out anything by director Donald Cammell (PERFORMANCE, WHITE OF THE EYE). Unfortunately, the movie's pin headed backers hacked Don's final cut and released this truncated version instead. Not only did Cammell remove his name from the credits, but soon afterward, on April 23, 1996, he committed suicide at the age of 62, leaving the film world poorer with his departure. .Still, this pic is laced with worthwhile tidbits, and yet another opportunity to watch Christopher Walken hamming it up. Anne Heche stars as a banker/part-time-whore who gets nose-deep in Walken (a self-proclaimed "Mr. Big") and his money laundering biz, then falls into a lesbo tryst with Walken's wife, Joan Chen (*very* hot). The convoluted story is nothing much, but the characters have a raw, erotic craziness and there are plenty of brutal twists that'll catch you off guard And while the copious sex scenes are sliced to ribbons, the mind games still remain The best scene has Walken catching scumbag chauffeur Stephen Bauer abusing Heche, going into one of his hyper rants, tearing off Bauer's underpants, and nearly butt-fucking the guy as punishment. It doesn't get much edgier (or funnier) than this whacked out sequence, and you can chalk this up as one of the year's most eccentric guilty pleasures

It's been over a decade since Buddy Giovinazzo's skid row masterwork, COMBAT SHOCK. Well, his outstanding sophomore effort, **NO WAY HOME**, is sure to put him on the festival circuit, and comes equipped with the starpower to get it noticed. Tim Roth and James Russo star as two Staten Island brothers; slow-witted Roth has just gotten out of the joint, while Russo is a shitheel who screws around on long-suffering wife Deborah Unger, deals grass (cut with Oregano), and is overdue on his Mob debts. Together, they become one big, open sore of a household. Though the story's arc is nothing new, writer/director Giovinazzo transcends that liability with a trio of by-the balls performances, with Russo as a scene-stealing Bastard Deluxe. Best of all, he avoids today's *faux grubbiness* syndrome, revels in moments of deranged bloodshed, and has a firm grasp on his grubby urban locales---from his characters' weathered homes, to local strip clubs, bars, and auto yards. Let's hope that a future distributor doesn't mess about with his cut, because the film has a honest emotional and physical brutality, with a rare understanding of these battered souls. An ode to brotherly love and the consequences of abusing that trust, NO WAY HOME is a raw but emotionally wrenching drama that'll leave you limp

TALES FROM THE CRYPT PRESENTS BORDELLO OF BLOOD (1996) is little more than a protracted, uninspired version of the TV show. The single saving grace is Dennis Miller, who gets all the best lines (almost as if he ad-lidded most of them himself), while everyone else reeks, including model turned-aging-model Angie Everhart and [illegible]-turned-junkie Corey Feldman (who, in the middle of the NYC premiere, was spotted in the Mens' Room, pathetically playing with toilet paper). Dennis plays a private dick hired to find Erika Eleniak's missing, asswipe brother Feldman, and enters a pneumatic vampire bordello, leading to lots of bare tits, predictable gore and exploding whores. Personally, I liked it better when it was titled FROM DUSK TILL DAWN. Dennis quips in mid movie, "I feel like I'm in the middle of a bad episode of TALES FROM THE CRYPT." Unfortunately, he *is* ..At the after-screening party at the trendy Le Bar Bat, I glimpsed Corey Feldman *hugging* Gilbert Gottfried. If only the movie could've given us anything half as blood-curdling.

Although it never reaches the heights of his blaxploitation classics, Larry Cohen's **ORIGINAL GANGSTAS (Orion; 1996)** is a Times Square vet's wet dream. First off, it's great to see the old gang together again in this Deuce throwback, led by Fred Williamson, Jim Brown and Pam Grier (a better title would've been THREE THE MIDDLE-AGED WAY), while the script is steeped in pre P.C., grindhouse retribution. When teen age gangbangers take over Gary, Indiana, Fred and all his old street chums reunite to slaughter the unruly punks (because, unlike the old days, these kids don't respect their elders). The plot is pure, high-octane Lyric fodder, with Cohen pumping up the anemic script with plenty of explosions, urban decay and a dead-serious air. Richard Roundtree and Ron O'Neal pop up in near-cameos, as well as well-worn (but welcome) faces like Paul Winfield, Isabel Sanford, and Wings Hauser as (no surprise) a white shitbag Still, instead of simply reworking the same old dusty formula, they missed the boat by not seizing this rare opportunity (a "Hammer" vehicle that opens in more than a dozen ghettoplexes), rethinking the entire genre, and hauling the black action pic into the 21st century.

The fact that **LES VISITEURS (Miramax; 1994)** is the most successful comedy of all time *in France* had me worried, since that country's sense of humor is almost as sophisticated as their sense of hygiene. Still, this time travel farce starring Jean Reno (THE PROFESSIONAL) piqued my curiosity Reno plays Sire Godefroy, a 12th century knight, who, with his filthy vassal Jacquasse, are spit into the 20th century by a dotty old wizard. Director Jean-Marie Poiré gives their fish-out of

water shenanigans all the subtlety of a Frogland PORKY'S, with hoary schtick involving B.O., farting, vomiting, and bad teeth. Most of the sight gags are long past their expiration date, but the plot is surprisingly clever, as Godefroy meets his descendants (who think he's their crazy cousin Hubert). It's even more amusing if you've had a few tumblers of cheap wine first (which explains why it might've been so popular in France). Of course, it could've been a *lot* worse, since Miramax originally planned to release an English-dubbed print, with limp ol' Mel Brooks supervising the job. God help us all.

BEWARE: CHILDREN AT PLAY (Troma; 1995) is a cruel little pic that's been sitting on a shelf since 1989. Although far from Troma's liveliest acquisitions, it has a fair share of gore, a tasty storyline, and (as usual) plenty of terrible, no name actors. But how can you *not* enjoy a movie about feral, cannibalistic kids? In a prologue, a father-son camping trip (in the wild of New Jersey) goes awry when Dad is snared by a bear trap, his young son goes batty and disembowels him, and grow up convinced he's Grendel from "Beowolf " Years later, local kids begin disappear ing into the deep woods and joining up with these "Woodies", who chow down on any intruding adults (while chanting "gulp the blood, gobble the flesh"). If you can ignore its amateurish edge, the second half is packed with cool shit, and it's rare to find a movie that has the guts to shove a gun into a child's mouth, and blow his brains out. Cool. Obviously scissored of gore in order to get an R rating, director Mik Cribben deserves credit for an original idea, and isolated moments which feel like THE LI'L RASCALS meets THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE.

Director Kevin Lindenmuth has several low-budget credits to name, including VAMPIRES AND OTHER STEREOTYPES. His latest, the urban vampire drama **ADDICTED TO MURDER (Brimstone Productions; 3 West 102nd St. #4B, New York, NY 10025; $20 plus $3 shipping)** strives to break new ground in the age-old bloodsucker genre. But despite some effective ideas, the painfully-amateur cast never allows it to transcends its indie roots. Mick McCleery (who has all the charisma of an aging frat-boy) stars as Joel, a traumatized guy who had a teenage close encounter with a female vampire, and is now incapable of Real Love. That is, until he's reunited with the seductively-undead Rachel (Laura McLaughlin), runs into another femme vamp (Sasha Graham), and spins headfirst into murder. Lindenmuth puts plenty of thought into the construction of his flick, mixing b&w and color, flashbacks and present day, distorted imagery and faked TV footage, as he peels away the layers of Joel's emotionally-dysfunctional existence and focuses on some lovely female bloodsuckers. Still, with its lack of gore or flesh, this is sure to leave hardcore horror fans impatiently waiting for the film to follow through on its more provocative conceits. A good idea, left unfulfilled.

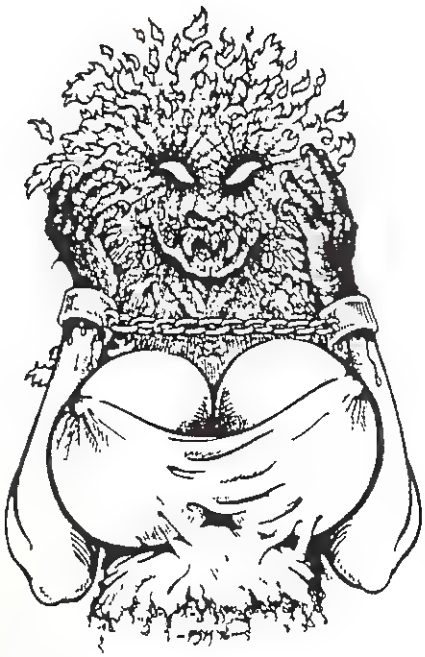
The British-lensed **FUNNYMAN (1994)** starts off like typical trash. But give this low-budgeter a chance, because it pays off the moment our magical killer arrives a grotesque, Punch-like jester (Tim James) who erupts from the ground and jump-starts a tongue-in-cheek reign of terror on the new residents of a palatial home. Meanwhile, a perplexed Christopher Lee (barely) turns up as Callum Chance, who loses the estate in a poker game in the first scenes, and pops up throughout the film in brief inserts which have little to do with the central slaughter. Though never scary, director/writer Simon Sprackling loads the shenanigans with surrealistic sequences and a few hilariously grisly demises (courtesy of Neill Gorton and Jim Francis) which bring to mind Peter Jackson's early gems—such as when a woman's brain is blasted clean out of her skull, and it flies across the room with her glasses still attached. Or uglier still, our Funnyman equipped with Russ Meyer-esque tits, performing a striptease (which is still more erotic than anything Demi Moore could manage). Cruel, inventive and silly as hell, FUNNYMAN is rude, bloody good fun.

Since the makers of **TIE-DIED: ROCK 'N' ROLL'S MOST DEADICATED FANS (BMG; 1995)** couldn't get permission to use any Grateful Dead music, the success of this puddle-deep documentary rests solely on the long-evaporated intelligence of its subjects—a variety of Deadheads, all following the summer '94 tour. And though the filmmakers want to be even-handed, it deserved a more ROGER AND ME-style approach, since most of the fans look as glassy-eyed as any 700 CLUB devotee. Still, it captures several telling moments. For instance, although everybody proudly explains that by following the Dead they're able to 'be themselves', they all listen to the same music, dress the same way, and seem totally interchangeable. A mohawked punk sums it up best when he explains how he went to a Dead show because he thought it'd be the one place where he'd be accepted—only to get treated like shit because he didn't fit into their rigid mold. It's also fun to realize that nowadays, only two years after this was filmed, most of these folks are living in their parents' den and learning the joys of constructing an Arch Deluxe.

It's easy to take a cheap shot at Burt Reynolds' horror entree, **THE MADDENING (Vidmark; 1995)**. What do you want me to pick on first? Inflated ego? Bad wig? Past decade of bombs? Actually, Burt plays it totally straight, and brings the only life to this 3rd-rate drivel. It begins when Mia Sara dumps her workaholic hubbie, runs off with her little girl, and winds up at the secluded home of sinister gas station owner Roy Scudder (Reynolds) Angie Dickinson co-stars as his basketcase wife, who thinks Mia is her long-lost sister Soon Mia is taken prisoner, Burt chops up her car, and she fears the same awaits her. It's your typical household of southern-fried wackos, full of family traumas and casual sadism It's total trash, yet somehow director Danny Huston (John's son) snagged some (once) big-name talent for this tawdry romp. This is Burt's show all the way though, playing an evil, easily-excitable bastard who slices a guy's throat, rapes Mia, and freaks out at hallucinations of his wheelchaired "daddy" (cackling old fart William Hickey). It's further proof that this has-been has a shred of talent left in his 60 year-old shell after all.

Heed this warning: Despite its snappy video box, **ZARKORR! THE INVADER (Monster Island;1995)** is unwatchable for even the most die-hard, piss-drunk, giant monster addict (like me). It's pathetic. A horned, 180-foot-tall behemoth erupts (make that *waddles*) out of a mountainside and begins crushing the patheti cally flimsy miniatures. Who can save the world? How about a pasty Newark postal employee (Rees Christian Pugh) who learns how to destroy this menace, thanks to a tiny alien who resembles a mini-skirted "mall-tramp," while picking up a dippy cop and a female reporter along the way. I admit there's something inherently lovable about any filmmaker so stupid they try to make a giant monster movie on a nine-dollar budget, but this pic was so goddamned inept it made my head ache. Meanwhile, director Aaron Osborne (who couldn't even get a surefire concept like CAGED HEAT 3000 right) continues to demonstrate his singular lack of a clue America can certainly use its own Godzilla, but this runny stool sample ain't it.

SHORT TAKES: Sorry, cinema pinheads, there's no cheap sympathy to be found in the caustic **WELCOME TO THE DOLLHOUSE**. When it comes to public school pics, this is THE BREAKFAST CLUB's evil twin sister, as we watch the never-very-likable, social outcast Dawn "Wiener-Dog" Wiener dealing with her hateful family, abusive schoolmates, and misguided emotions. I can't believe that after the wretched FEAR, ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION, Todd Solondz could emerge with such a smart, abrasive, sophomore effort...It's amazing that Mary Harmon's **I SHOT ANDY WARHOL** ever got made in the first place. As Warhol sycophant-turned-psycho stalker Valerie Solanas, Lili Taylor is hopelessly nuts; as Andy, Jared Harris is gloriously lost; while Stephen Dorff proves he's got a smidgen of talent after all, as the fabulous Candy Darling. Unfortunately, although it reproduces the surface subversity (from Warehouse parties, to Max's Kansas City), it lacks that era's anarchic energy Worth a look, even if it misses the bull's eye. .It's no news that **FOUR ROOMS** is a fiasco. But here's a quick scorecard: Room 1: No laughs, no pay-off, some bare tits. Room 2: No laughs, no pay-off, no reason to exist Room 3: One tremendous vomit-on-a-rotted-corpse gag. Room 4: An ego circle jerk, which makes you wish Tarantino's big ol' head would explode like at the beginning of SCANNERS . Next, close your eyes, and imagine a Tarantino movie if Quentin couldn't write snappy dialogue. Open your eyes, and you've got **THINGS TO DO IN DENVER WHEN YOU'RE DEAD**, which wastes everyone in the cast (except Treat Williams, whose edginess deserves a better movie) With Steve Buscemi and Christopher Walken as cookie-cutter weirdos, and criminal Andy Garcia hanging around a malt shop; this slop had me itching to kick director Gary Fleder's film-school ass down a tall flight of stairs... To my surprise, diva-in-training Liv isn't bad as a dim, greasy spoon waitress in James Mangold's **HEAVY**, whose presence creates havoc with the gravity-challenged cook, well played by Pruitt Taylor Vince. Painfully honest, this low-key diner-drama also features a solid performance from Debbie Harry, as well as a small town dysfunction which gives it additional weight. Still, I think Liv would be best off staying far from any triple-digit-I.Q. roles...I don't care what the hell Jim Carrey fans thought about Ben Stiller's **THE CABLE GUY** The idea of tossing Hollywood's $20 million buffoon into a homo-erotic obsession pic is too good to be true! Edgy, subversive and understandably ousted from theatres after only a couple weeks, this film made me squirm and it's the first time I've actually had respect for Carrey. This could well be his THE DAY THE CLOWN CRIED.. Peter Jackson's **THE FRIGHTENERS** tanked at the box office—probably because any halfway-intelligent moviegoer wouldn't be caught dead paying to see a Michael J. Fox movie. The half-pint isn't too bad as a sleazy ghostbuster type though, and (despite MAJOR plot pitfalls) the pic has a relatively nasty edge. Full of stylish CGI effects and a hopped-up supporting cast, this may be lower case Jackson, but it's still got more drive and imagination than any other genre slop this summer.



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BEYOND DARKNESS
Uncut version of Joe D'Amato's "Buried Alive"! Necrophiliac creep mutilates pretty young girls! **(X)**

BLOODY MOON
Uncut Jesus Franco! Deformed freak kills girls! **(X)**

CANNIBAL APOCALYPSE
John Saxon stars in the uncut version of "Invasion of the Flesh Hunters", with all of the missing gore scenes intact!!! **(X)**

CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST
Uncut, uncensored sleaze classic, full of rape, torture, and graphic death! See a woman impaled ass through mouth!!! **(X)**

CAT IN THE BRAIN
A naked girl is ground up to feed hungry flesh-eating pigs! Uncut Fulci gore! **(X)**

CITY OF THE LIVING DEAD
Uncut LBX version of "The Gates of Hell"! Super-gory Lucio Fulci classic! Dope-smoking retard gets drill thru head!

CONTAMINATION
Uncut super-ultra-gory version of "Alien Contamination" by Luigi Cozzi! **(X)**

DEEP RED
105-min LBX print of Argento's crimson classic contains all of the missing gore!

FACELESS
Uncut Jesus Franco! Pretty girls are mutilated! Telly Savalas stars! **(X)**

GRIM REAPER
Uncut Joe D'Amato fave features a cannibal eating a human fetus! Yum! **(X)**

GRIM REAPER 2
Uncut Joe D'Amato sequel! Gory! **(X)**

LET SLEEPING CORPSES LIE
Uncut LBX zombie gore classic! **(X)**

MAKE THEM DIE SLOWLY
Cannibals torture topless girls! **(X)**

NEW YORK RIPPER
Uncut sexy horror is a misogynist's wet dream, from Lucio Fulci! **(X)**

TENEBRAE
Uncut LBX Argento slasher includes the infamous "spurting stump" sequence!

TRAP THEM & KILL THEM
Emanuelle meets ugly breast-chomping cannibals! Uncut D'Amato sex'n'gore! **(X)**

SUPER-SEXY EURO-SLEAZE
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AUTOPSY
Uncut necrophilia fantasy! **(X)**

THE BEAST
Uncut uncensored beast rapist! By Walerian Borowczyk. In French only. **(X)**

THE DEMONS
Jesus Franco's witchcraft torture and luscious lesbian seduction fun! **(X)**

DEPORTED WOMEN OF THE SS
Erotic Nazi torture sleaze with pubic hair shaving and bloody vaginas! **(X)**

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Uncut Jesus Franco sex-monsters! Naked monster-worshippers! **(X)**

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Killer cannibal Nazis eat human flesh and have sleazy sex! **(X)**

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Uncut Franco sleaze! In Spanish only. **(X)**

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Blood-drinking lesbians force nubile girl captive to eat her own bloody menstrual secretions! Repulsive! **(XXX)**

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Buxom whores in action from Tinto Brass, director of "Caligula"! In Italian only. **(X)**

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BOOKS AND ZINES

JAPANESE CINEMA: THE ESSENTIAL HANDBOOK by Tom Weisser and Yuko Mihara Weisser ($19.95 to Video Search of Miami, P.O. Box 16-1917, Miami, FL 33116).

Whether you're a connoisseur of Japanese cult cinema or not, this volume is essential reading. And if you enjoyed Weisser's Hong Kong-aimed, ASIAN TRASH CINEMA books, be prepared for a full-scale brain embolism the moment you get your hands on this gem, written and compiled by Tom and his wife Yuko. Nearly 350 pages thick and containing over 1000 reviews, this A-Z volume covers every bizarre genre since the '50s. From Godzilla and all the various giant rubber monsters, to cult figures such as "Beat" Takashi and Seijun Suzuki.

What makes this book really shine is its avalanche of info on movies you've probably never even heard of. There are mini-essays on Kinji Fukasaku's explosive Yakuza series, FIGHT WITHOUT HONOR; the SCORPION: FEMALE PRISONER tales, which put U.S. Women-in-Prison pic to shame; plus SUKEBAN DEKA, with their schoolgirls and deadly yo-yos. There's even a dissection of the infamous GUINEA PIG gore pics.

More than just a series of reviews, Weisser transforms every entry into a mini-history lesson. And as anyone familiar with ASIAN CULT CINEMA already knows, Tom is no snob; writing about Pink Films and half-naked schoolgirls with all the exuberance he puts into a Kurosawa review. But be warned: Tom and Yuko freely admit that they didn't have access to many of these pics, and had to cobble together some reviews from various Japanese sources (which can lead to a few totally ass-backwards plot synopses).

No matter what avenue of cult cinema catches your fancy—sex, gore, action, or general deviance—you'll find a wealth of info packed in between these covers. There's never been anything like this informative, vastly entertaining guide (at least in English, that is). If you haven't ordered this book yet, what the hell are you waiting for?

LUCIO FULCI: BEYOND THE GATES by Chas. Balun and DIRECTOR'S CUT by Chas. Balun (Blackest Heart Books, c/o Shawn Smith, 1291 Hays St. Suite 360, San Leandro, CA 94577. Fulci - $14.95; Director's - $10).

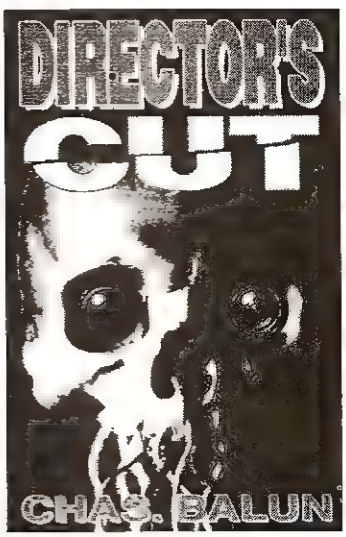
It's a double-barreled blast of Balun, starting with a "Tribute to the Maestro." Yes, the late great Lucio Fulci might be gone, but he certainly won't be forgotten; especially if Chas. has his say about it. This slim little volume (80 pages) is generously sprinkled with overseas ad mats, lobby card repros, photos from the Fulci Family Archives, and a lusciously gory, full-color cover. It also kicks off with a short, but wonderful introduction by Lucio's daughter, Antonella, who gives us a taste of her dad at his best and worst, and publisher Shawn Smith's fond memories of meeting his idol at the '96 Fango Con.

Avoiding many biographical details, Balun primarily sticks to Fulci's chunkblowing film career, which warped a generation of horror fans and (soon-to-be) filmmakers. We get the infamous ol' ten-inch-splinter-into-the-eyeball sequence from ZOMBIE ("a moment of incandescent cinema"), and lovably grue-strewn epics such as THE BEYOND and THE GATES OF HELL, with Balun cannibalizing quotes from Fulci and FX man Gianetto DeRossi from his own DEEP RED magazine. A few of Fulci's non-horror efforts (THE SMUGGLER) are favorably mentioned, while THE NEW YORK RIPPER is labeled a "hollow, forced, uninspired effort that few have rallied to support" (for a different viewpoint, check out *my* review on Page 8). Unfortunately, his most obscure work is barely touched upon, before getting the heave-ho and moving onto his next pic.

My only major complaint about the book is its length. When totaled, Balun's text runs barely 25 pages; far from the space required to do his amazing life and films justice. Still, this does accomplish one all-important task—if you're not already a Fulci fanatic, after reading this exuberant, loving tribute, you'll be slobbering to check out his legacy...The book even comes complete with a cool FULCI LIVES! bumper sticker that'd be great to slap on your local minister's car.

While on the subject of Balun, we come to DIRECTOR'S CUT, a novella that gives Chas. an opportunity to write about two of the things he's most familiar with: Gore 'n' Fandom. It's a quick read, with large print, wide margins and running only 75 pages, but Balun wastes no time in getting elbow-deep in the grue, with a zombie attack full of "gray-green desiccated viscera, shredded limbs, and unidentifiable dollops of putrescent flesh."

Most of the story revolves around horror director Jeff Rollins, whose latest offering to his slobbering fan-geeks is ZOMBIE SABBATH, which he considers the "Ultimate Chunkblower." The guy's also hiding a shady past laced with innuendo about his early, all-too-realistic jungle slaughter-fest, CANNIBAL FURY. Much of the story is set at a horror movie convention, with gorehounds lining up for a personal appearance from Rollins, as well as a screening of his director's cut.



We also meet fan writers Mike and Jack, gabbing about bootleg Death Videos, and the rumor that when Rollins' wife killed herself and her kids, she filmed the entire thing. Then there's Raymond, the ultimate Death Freak, who sits at home watching snuff films. And let's not forget one sick fucker from Rollins' past, whose own cinematic atrocities make ZOMBIE SABBATH look like MY LITTLE PONY.

While spinning his tale, Balun certainly pegs the fan world; embracing the convention milieu, even as he gives its more pathetic aspects a swift kick in the ass. And whenever the dialogue and characters get a tad obvious, he enthusiastically ladles on the hardcore splatter (although his name-dropping is almost as annoying as Stephen King's). A rude, crude, gut-bursting wet-dream that's best appreciated by anyone who's been on the convention circuit and knows most of these sick 'n' obsessive characters from firsthand exposure.

THE PRACTICAL GUIDE TO INDEPENDENT FILMMAKING: THE RIGHT WAY TO MAKE YOUR FIRST FEATURE. Written and compiled by Kevin J. Lindenmuth (Brimstone Productions, 3 West 102nd St. #4B, New York, NY 10025; $50 plus $3 shipping).

First off, I know what you're thinking: "Fifty dollars?!" Yeah, it's pretty steep, especially when most of us are scraping together pocket change for a video rental and a six pack of Genesee Cream Ale. But if you're planning on making your own, no-budget movie and have the bread to actually pull it off (whether it's from a long-suffering day job, trust fund, or 7-11 heists) this 170-page, ring-bound volume is worth a look, since it's full of advice on how to shave your expenses, and actually get your movie seen.

Best of all, instead of simply rambling on at length, like most ego-fed directors would do, Lindenmuth recruits a couple dozen other indie filmmakers, and generously lets them add their two cents on the subject matter. The fan-circuit names include Scooter McCrae, Tim Ritter, Eric Stanze, Blair Murphy, and many others—ranging from the best of the indies, to the absolute dregs (who shall remain nameless). Hence, the book has a round robin feel, starting with a topic, followed by Lindenmuth's response, and then the contributors' viewpoints.

We get a look into their influences (ranging from Creature Feature schlock to Tarkovsky); the advantages/disadvantages of film school; even how to get your film to the masses (complete with info on tape duplication and video boxes). Some of their advice is pretty obvious to anyone with half a brainstem ("The script is very important."), but when it hits the Equipment & Format

section, there's hands-on info for any newcomer to the scene. Not to mention, helpful tips on location shooting, permits, insurance, storyboarding, et cetera.

This book allows you to learn from their mistakes, and hopefully avoid them on your own production. Personally, I also got a kick out of the book's insights into these filmmakers; especially the ones who seem totally full of themselves, even though their "classics" are only being watched by a handful of knuckle-dragging horror dweebs. This book is akin to sitting around with a bunch of directors, who have persevered against all odds, and getting the rare opportunity to pick their brains.

THE PSYCHOTRONIC VIDEO GUIDE by Michael J. Weldon (St. Martin's Griffin; $29.95).

After much anticipation (and a continually shifting release date), Michael J. Weldon's long-awaited follow-up to his PSYCHOTRONIC ENCYCLOPEDIA OF FILM has finally hit bookstores. And cult movie fanatics around the world are wiser for it. This hernia-inducing, A-Z volume is even more comprehensive than the first. Almost 700 pages thick, and crammed to the margins with reviews and information, Weldon has spent his time well in the decade-plus since his first tome.

While his first volume consisted primarily of pics that you'd be able to catch while surfing late-night cable, Weldon includes everything imaginable this time around. From the John Waters & Russ Meyer collections, to assorted oddities from mail-order companies like Something Weird Video and Video Search of Miami. To his credit, he also covers every mediocre straight-to-video chunk of crap that he could lay his eyes on. He even remembers to include new entries for movies that he originally made mistakes about (i.e. as we're all aware nowadays, KISS ME QUICK was *not* directed by Russ Meyer).

By covering all the imaginable bases, hardcore addicts will undoubtedly grimace at a few of Weldon's more mainstream entries (do we *really* need Hollywood swill like ROCKY I-V?). But the only real problem with the book is that much of the time, Michael doesn't give the reader any honest opinion on the movies—tossing us a few interesting facts, a couple stars, a sentence of storyline, and leaving us in the dark about whether the movie is worth wasting our hard-earned cash on.

Of course, the book also includes all the reviews from Weldon's Psychotronic Video mag. But even if you've been a longtime subscriber, you'll want to grab it in order to have them all compiled into one volume for easy reference. This is an indispensable source for anyone who considers themselves a fringe movie addict. To hell with Leonard Maltin, *this* is the real thing.

BAKED POTATOES: A POT SMOKER'S GUIDE TO FILM AND VIDEO by John Hulme and Michael Wexler (Doubleday; $10).

First off, I've got to hand it to Doubleday for publishing this unapologetically pro-Weed book, which promises to lead any confused stoner (isn't that a redundant term?) on the path to grass-enhanced video nirvana. Unfortunately, much of the time, the two sound like a stoned-out Joe Bob Briggs, with more attention to their own hazy anecdotes than the movie in-question. Their writing style is also aimed straight at the attention span of any hardcore weedhead, who'll pick up the book for a couple goodies, set it down to re-light their roach, and forget all about it. Meanwhile, anyone straight who tries to read it in one sitting with undoubtedly o.d. on their plethora of "baked" jokes.

These guys can certainly write, they have a good sense of humor, but they know jack about movies. Oh, there's no argument about "Five Pot Leaf" masterworks like THE ROAD WARRIOR and WILLY WONKA. But recommending MIDNIGHT RUN or MANHUNTER while you're high? I think not, my drooling friends. Then, they trash Ken Russell (all but ALTERED STATES), while giving a glassy-eyed thumb's down to more abrasive fare, like NAKED LUNCH, MEET THE FEEBLES or ERASERHEAD (which they call "unwatchable"). Hey, I ran midnight showings of E-HEAD back in '79, in a theatre so smoky that the projector could barely cut through it, and I didn't hear any complaints.

Still, you've got to love a book that has The Beastie Boys' SKILLZ TO PAY THE BILLS right next to Joseph Campbell's THE POWER OF MYTH. In addition, there are a few oasis-like guest reviewers, like High Times editor-in-chief Steve Hager recommending THE DOORS, and Wavy Gravy picking the long-forgotten CISCO PIKE. This is far from a definitive guide, since these guys have acknowledged only the tip of the iceberg, while ignoring flicks that would have most stoned film freaks hugging their TV like a long lost bong.

HONG KONG ACTION CINEMA by Bey Logan (The Overlook Press; $21.95).

In the next few years, every publisher is going to have their own book on Hong Kong cinema. Inevitably, most of them are going to suck. But when it comes to this informative overview of the genre, it's clear that Bey Logan isn't just leaping on a suddenly-trendy bandwagon. He knows his shit, and this love for the material seeps through every page.

Laced with gorgeous stills, this covers a wide historical berth, beginning with the early days of the Peking Opera and the groundbreaking series of Wong Fei Hung films starring Kwan Tak Hing (who passed away on June 28, 1996 at the age of 91). There are also entire chapters devoted to such Gods of HK action as Bruce Lee, Jackie Chan and Samo Hung. Well-researched and loaded with terrific anecdotes, each includes lists of their finest films, as well as their most outrageous martial arts sequences.

Other fave chapters include a look at Chinese Ghost movies (like those ridiculous hopping vampires); and hard-hitting heroines, from the earliest days of Cheng Pei Pei (THE GIRL WITH THE THUNDERBOLT KICK), to recent kick-ass queens such as Michelle Khan. Unfortunately, the hottest stars of the '90s (such as Jet Li) wind up shoveled into one thin, final chapter. (Of course, Logan has to leave something for his next project, right?)

By far, the most entertaining tidbits are buried in the plethora of sidebars—ranging from the 10-best films of Wang Yu (THE ONE-ARMED SWORDSMAN) and the history of Fong Sai Yuk, to a checklist of the cheesy Bruce Lee imitators, who flooded grindhouses in the mid-'70s. Rather than taking the easy route, and simply reveling in high body counts and gratuitous mayhem, Logan sifts through the surface violence and gives it all a historical (and in many cases, cultural) perspective. If nothing else, this is essential for its avalanche of "Best of..." lists, which will keep newcomers perusing their Chinatown video stores for months to come.

VAMPYROS LESBOS SEXADELIC DANCE PARTY (Motel Records).

The title alone almost sold me on this soundtrack compilation, featuring a trio of Jess Franco pics from '70-'71—VAMPYROS LESBOS, SHE KILLS IN ECSTASY and THE DEVIL CAME FROM AKASAVA. They're three of Franco's more beloved treats, but not because they're all *good*, mind you. It's because they all starred the luscious (often undraped) Soledad Miranda, who stares seductively from the CD cover, and was tragically killed in a car crash soon after heating up this EuroTrash triptych.

In most cases, the scores for schlocky horror movies (especially U.S. ones) are instantly disposable items. Not here. Originally released as two separate (now quarter-of-a-century old) albums, composers Manfred Hübler and Siegfried Schwab rip out all the psychedelic stops. It's 50 minutes of elevator muzak for acidheads. All it needs is a bevy of half-naked go-go-girls, wildly gyrating.

This tripped-out collection of tunes (with titles like "Kamasutra" and "The Lions and the Cucumber") cannibalizes any popular sound and turns it on its own campy ear. There's a little "Theme from THE WILD ANGELS," a touch of Donovan, some Herb Alpert, plus an incongruous melange of sitar, horns, fuzz guitar, and shrieking vocals. It's almost as if they tossed anything that popped into their brains into the mix (sorta like the way Franco makes his movies, come to think of it).

In the wrong surroundings, this authentically cheesy bag of faarrrrr-out cuts will clear a room before Side One is over. On the other hand, it's perfect for your next freakout. Close your eyes, slip on your ever-handy dashiki, turn up the stereo, and let the images flow...In addition, the gorgeous, 12-page booklet is enough to make any Franco-holic purchase the CD, especially those enamored with Ms. Miranda's more obvious gifts.

VIDEO DISTRIBUTORS

Of course your local Blockbuster doesn't stock the weird-assed flicks reviewed in SHOCK CINEMA!
Thank goodness these mail order businesses are around, so you can turn into a total video zombie with their demented wares.

ALPHA BLUE ARCHIVES, Dept. SC, P.O. Box 16072, Oakland, CA 94610. E-mail: archives@sirius.com. Features some of the grungiest exploitation pics from the '60s and '70s, including nudie-roughies and vintage, Triple-X porn.

BLACKEST HEART VIDEO, c/o Shawn Smith,1291 Hays St. #360, San Leandro, CA 94577. Shawn's extensive listing features some of the nastiest films on the planet, plus video dementia that'll have you laughin' your drunken ass off (like *The Kids of Widney High*). Write for his free catalog.

BOOTLEG LIFE, P.O. Box 138545, Chicago, IL 60613. These video degenerates focus on the raunchiest XXX-pics from around the globe. Their "scatalog" is $2, and features juicy descriptions of such delicacies as *Two Foot Turd*. Uggh.

EUR-ASIA VIDEO SERVICES, P.O. Box 568, Olympia, WA 98507. Centers primarily on "tormentedly twisted titles" from overseas, including HK action, bizarre animation, and X to XXX sexpics. Their very enthusiastic catalog is $3.

FILM THREAT VIDEO, P.O. Box 3170, Los Angeles, CA 90078-3170. An exclusive line-up of ultra-subversive underground auteurs including Richard Kern and Jorg Buttgereit (*Nekromantik, Schramm*).

JUST FOR THE HELL OF IT, Dept. SC, P.O. Box 19, Butler, NJ 07405. What happened to The Gore Gazette's Private Video Library? It's here! J4HI features the best from the grindhouse era, including rare blaxploitation and sleaze. Only $3 for their hilarious catalog (checks made out to Mike Decker).

LUMINOUS FILM & VIDEO WURKS, P.O. Box 1047. Dept. SS1, Medford, NY 11763. E-mail: LFVW@aol.com. One of my faves, offering everything from high art to low trash. From spaghetti westerns to arthouse dementia from Marco Ferreri and Suzuki Seijun. High-quality copies and full color packaging.

PHANTOM VIDEO, P.O. Box 16-3604, Miami, FL 33116. Loaded with sleazy videos, including gory, uncut EuroTrash, and triple-X dementia from around the world. $2 gets you their catalog.

SOMETHING WEIRD VIDEO, P.O. Box 33664, Seattle, WA 98133. A jaw-dropping array of classic sexploitation and beyond, including low-rent auteurs and every form of grindhouse fare. Mike Vraney adds hundreds of ultra-obscure titles every year, and their mind-blowing catalog is $5.

STARLIGHT VIDEO, P.O. Box 14222, Chicago, IL 60614-0222. A gritty catalog loaded with a tasty array of skanky gems, from EuroSleaze, Asian action and Mondo pix, to Blaxploitation and Splatter. Terrific stuff.

STARLIGHT VIDEO, 8518 S.W. Tamiami Trail STE# 1335, Miami, FL 33144. Yes, there are *two* Starlight Videos. This "alternative video source" sells uncut Euro-rareties, sicko horror and hard-edged sleaze. $3 gets you their catalog.

TAPES OF TERROR, 6226 Darnell, Dept. SC, Houston, Texas 77074-7416. Hitting all the genres, from sleazy rarities and classic B-movies, to the tops in EuroTrash and Cult Cinema. Send a S.A.S.E. for their catalog.

VIDEO DUNGEON, P.O. Box 873, Tarpon Springs, FL 34688. Features an array of classic schlock—including European horror, Asian weirdness and sleazy sexploitation. Their catalog is $3 (all checks payable to M. Wilson).

VIDEO JUNKIE, P.O. Box 4051, Ventura, CA 93007. E-mail: vidjunki@isle.net. Overflowing with uncut flicks from genre geniuses such as Argento, Fulci, Naschy, and more! Their impressive catalog is $3, or take a trip into their website at: http://www.isle.net/~vidjunki/index.html

VIDEO SEARCH OF MIAMI, P.O. Box 16-1917, Miami, Fl 33116-1917. E-mail: VSoM@aol.com. A one-of-a-kind mix of overseas delights. From auteurs like Fuller and Melville, to Cannibal Movies, Giallos and Asian oddities. Best of all, VSoM subtitles their favorite pics! Write for their amazing free catalog.

VIDEO WASTELAND, 214 Fair Street, Berea, OH 44017-1554. A mail-order *rental* company, featuring 1000's of hard-to-find titles, from Fulci and Franco, to HK action. You'll never have to leave your house again! Their fat catalog is $4.

[Editorial Ramblings: continued] 9-to-5'ers rushing to Port Authority). Even the Sleaze Window Shoppers are gone; and I should know, because back when I was an early-'80s tourist, I'd always take the long way back to the Hotel Seymour (also long gone), just to get a quick rush from 42nd's skanky allure. It was kind of like those (wretched) Family Circus cartoons, with the dotted line of Billy's roundabout route home---except I was checking out every foul, theatre in sight.

By far, the weirdest part of the trip was walking into the old Selwyn—one of my favorite haunts—which has now been turned into a Tourist Center, with the beautiful old lobby covered from floor-to-ceiling with big, ugly photos of Times Square in its heyday. More important, in an effort to reshape the past, there's a distinct absence of any pix from the '70s and '80s; when this place was a primo locale to watch shitty double bills and torch up without complaint. One of the only indications of its sleazier daze is a barely visible blow-up of a marquee for the '70s sex-pic THAT WOMAN, positioned in the furthest, back corner of the lobby. How fucking convenient. The actual theatre is closed to the public, and unfortunately, so is the old basement Men's Room, which had a long-accumulated stench that made you feel like you were wading knee-deep inside Charles Bukowski's lower intestine...At the very least, the old Sandwich Shop next door is still open, but it wouldn't surprise me if a Starbucks was wedged into that same spot the next time I walked by...The latest update has Disney announcing the world premiere of their lamest, er, *latest* musical stageshow on 42nd Street next year. Wouldya believe, KING DAVID? Yes, the Old Testament comes to The Deuce! In other words, they're not just cleaning up Times Square, they're turning it into the Happiest, Holiest Place on Earth...It makes me wonder where the city put all the scum who used to call The Deuce home; the homeless, the addicts, the weirdos—all in search of a cheap (or sometimes, not-so-cheap) thrill. I wish somebody would clue me in, that way I'd know where to go to have a good time nowadays.

Sure, I go on about this too damned much. But the demise of the Times Square doesn't just make me nostalgic for days long gone. It also makes me sad for the future generations of brain-damaged, beer-blind film deviants who'll never get the chance to have the same twisted memories. Nobody is ever going to witness those salad days again (sitting at home, watching the same movies on video does NOT count, thank you). Take a L.A. double bill of Jess Franco's 99 WOMEN and Robert Altman's A COLD DAY IN THE PARK---we're not gonna see that type of programming savvy again in this lifetime. Or how about a favorite drive-in double-bill from my adolescence: WOODSTOCK and THE WILD BUNCH ("Three days of peace, love, freedom...plus about a thousand blood-gushing Mexicans!")...At least we can be thankful for the theatres that attempt to keep those beloved films in the public awareness. In NYC we've got the Film Forum at 209 West Houston; which makes up for its trendy surroundings by digging up some truly obscure gems. Unfortunately, one recent casualty of moviegoer apathy is The Lighthouse Cinema, on 116 Suffolk, which was always good for a laugh, thanks to their joyously deranged schedule and battered ambiance...But enough of my blathering. Dig into your fridge for a cold one, and while you're at it, pop another for me. 9/15/96

CORRECTIONS: SHOCK CINEMA #8

In the review of Basil Dearden's **ALL NIGHT LONG (1961)**, W.D. Richter was credited for the screenplay. Peter Achilles and Nel King actually scripted the film.

Though the 68-minute version of **ATROCITY [All Night Long 2] (1995)** we reviewed was certainly vile enough, the original X-rated version ran 78 whopping minutes.

MAGS, ZINES & SMALL-PRESS PUBLICATIONS

Here are the mags that have turned up in the SC mailbox recently. Thanks go out to all the generous editors. Note: When sending for 'zines, try to send cash (even in Manhattan, where the post offices suck, I've never had a problem with missing cash). If you really *must* send a check or money order, make it out in the editor's name, unless stated otherwise.

ANGELS IN DISTRESS #2 (4100 Lake Washington Blvd. N. #B202, Renton, WA 98056; $4; Website: http://www.accelnet.com/clients/ger/angel2.htm). This second, spiral-bound outing features Chris Campbell's' comic "Life in a Barrel"—a wicked glimpse into white trash dementia—while Greg Goodsell hands us in-depth reviews and hilarious anecdotes, like a visit to a S.F. porno house.

ASIAN CULT CINEMA #13 (P.O. Box 16-1917, Miami, FL 33116; $6, or 6 issues for $30). Even though Asian Trash Cinema has eliminated the 'Trash' in its title, don't worry—they still cover plenty of movies which fit that description. Full of reviews and good articles, this is a must for anyone on the cutting edge of Asian dementia.

BOMBA MOVIES #3 and #4 (dist. by Dark Carnival, 17 Cottage Beck Road, Scunthorpe, Nth Lincolnshire, DN16 1LQ, ENGLAND; Free in the UK / elsewhere, send a couple IRC's). A hilarious digest devoted to the darkest niches of cinema. With its crude design and hardcore rants, #3 features such "gems" as *Porno Holocaust*, while #4 tackles the wild world of blaxploitation! Get it!

CASHIERS DU CINEMART #6 (P.O. Box 2401, Riverview, MI 48192-2401; $2). A digest full of hilarious takes on film, video and beyond. The latest slopping includes articles on *Andre the Giant Has a Posse*, the Americanization of Jackie Chan, and recollections from editor Mike White about his days working movie multiplexes.

CINERAIDER #5 (Richard Akiyama, P.O. Box 240226, Honolulu, HI 96824-0226; $5, or $13 for 3 issues). A digest devoted to Hong Kong cinema, with a variety of writers cranking out their opinions, while covering everything from low-key dramas and kickass action, to Catagory III titilation.

EUROPEAN TRASH CINEMA #14 (Craig Ledbetter, P.O. Box 5367, Kingwood, TX 77325; E-mail: 74563.1756@compuserve. com; $20 for 4 issues). When it comes to Euro-schlock, ETC is at the top of the heap, unearthing obscure masterworks and unwatchable dreck, and tying it all together into a slick package of reviews and articles. The latest issue features a tribute to Lucio Fulci.

FATAL VISIONS #20 (P.O. Box 1184, Thornbury, VIC 3071, Australia; $6 U.S. Cash only; E-mail: fatalmic@ozemail.com.au). One of my long-time faves, full of info, humor and attitude, while keeping you abreast of all the genre news on the other side of the world. "Eyeball in Tokyo" covers that city's sleaziest entertainment, plus there are book, video and movie reviews. Highly recommended.

GUTTER TRASH #4 (Mike Tsaros, 1740 Mulford Ave. Apt. 10-G, Bronx, NY 10461; $5.50). This hilarious, slapdash 'zine continues on its sleazy route. The latest includes a lengthy interview with Wayne/Jayne County (the Queen of Transgender Rock 'n' Roll), dinner with Vampira, and plenty of acidic video and record reviews.

HEADPRESS #12 (40 Rossall Avenue, Radcliffe, Manchester, M26 1JD, UK; for US orders, contact AK Distribution, P.O. Box 40682, San Francisco, CA 94149-0682). The latest Journal of Sex, Religion and Death is bloated with articles on head-hunters, de Sade's The 120 Days of Sodom, the outlandish joys of Mexican music, and an interview with Russ Meyer. Thoroughly twisted.

MIDNIGHT MARQUEE #50 (Gary J. Svehla, 9721 Britinay Lane, Baltimore, MD 21234; $5, or $15 for 3). Upping its schedule to 3-issues a year, this hefty journal of "classic horror, science fiction, suspense, and noir cinema" is loaded with informative laserdisc & book reviews, and solidly-written articles.

MISTER DENSITY #7 (P.O. Box 172, Westview Station, Binghamton, NY 13905-0172; $2, CASH only). The "Unofficial Crispin H. Glover fanzine" is one of my all-time favorites! Crammed with news and views, it includes info on his directorial debut (*What Is It?*), an interview with *Rubin & Ed* director Trent Harris, and plenty of glorious photos.

MONDO CINE #1 (Roger Leatherwood, P.O. Box 10597, Oakland, CA 95610; $2.50, or $7 for 3 issues). Instead of film reviews, this digest refreshingly examines the movie industry as a whole, mixing info 'n' opinions on Hollywood's ever-inflating budgets, the "twinning" of old theatres, and a profile of *why* the grindhouses were born. Worth a look.

REMOTE JOCKEY DIGEST #3 (Box 572349, Tarzana, California 91356; $2 ; E-mail: dcoleman@ix.netcom.com). An ecclectic mix of film reviews fill this digest-sized 'zine. Better still are its two lengthiest pieces—for Sasquatch fans, there's a Guide to Bigfoot Cinema. Plus Cathode Junkie, a look into the joys of TV addiction.

THE REWINDER #1 (John Hudson, Box 148111, Nashville, TN 37214; $3.50). The lengthy cover article on Brinke Stevens turned me off, but the rest of this new 'zine covers interesting material, such as different cuts of *Dawn of the Dead*, Steckler's classics, and horror host Sir Cecil Creape.

SAMHAIN #56 (77 Exeter Road, Topsham, Exeter, Devon EX3 OLX, England; £1.95/$4.95). "Britain's Longest Running Horror Film Magazine" keeps on rolling, thanks to editor John Gullidge. The latest, slick issue is packed with the latest releases, video and book reviews, interviews and obscure treats.

SCHLOCK #22 (John Chilson, 3841 4th Avenue #192, San Diego, CA 92103; $1 plus a stamp; E-mail: newsline@thegroup.net). Despite a format change from newsprint to saddle-staple, Chilson doesn't change the meat of his 'zine, with a mix of obscure videos, record reviews and lots more from the depths of Cultural Hell.

SCREEM #7 (Darryl Mayeski, 490 S. Franklin St., Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702-3765; $3.95, or $15 for 4 issues: E-mail: Screemag@aol.com). This slick 'zine focuses on the horror/sexploitation realm, offering reviews on indie endeavors, schlock oddities and books. The latest includes interviews with Brother Theodore and Buddy Giovinazzo.

SHOCKING IMAGES #6 (Mark Jason Murray, P.O. Box 601972, Sacramento, CA 95860. $14 for a 4-issue sub). A pleasantly subversive 'zine which focuses on the darkest, goriest niches of the film world. With several pages devoted to Lucio Fulci, spot-on reviews of sexy EuroTrash and indie slop, plus soundtrack and CD reviews.

TERMINAL BRAIN ROT #8 (Mike Huegen, 7312 Reynard Lane, Charlotte, NC 28215; $2, or $5 for four issues). The latest edition of this digest-sized journal is crammed with video reviews, White Castle memories, The Yardbirds playing a high school prom, and an article by director Pat Bishow.

TRASH COMPACTOR v.2#8 (253 College Street #108, Toronto, Ontario, M5T 1R5, CANADA; $4 plus $1 postage). Their "Pissed Off Women" issue covers the career of Pam Grier, gives us a list of other angry femme fatales, and takes us to porn-starlet Tiffany Lords' stageshow. Sleazy, fun and exuberantly written.

UNCUT #1 (Midnight Media, The Barn, Upton Lodge, Hamerton Road, Upton, Cambs, PE17 5YA, England; £3.50). This cool UK mag dredges up uncut "video weirdness" from around the globe, while reviewing such bile as *God's Bloody Acre* and *What the Peeper Saw*. The premiere issue features an interview with Paul Naschy.

VEX #2 (P.O. Box 319, Roselle, NJ 07203; $3.95). Vex returns with its "All Director's Issue," with subjects ranging from schlockmeisters Michael Winner and William Girdler, to studio war-horse Robert Wise. Still, its tribute to the 3-film legacy of Ivan Hall (*Kill or Be Killed*) shows youwhere its heart lies—in the gutter.

VIDEO EYEBALL v.2#4 (122 Montclair Avenue, Boston MA 02131-1344; $4, or 6-issue sub for $15; E-mail: videoeye@tiac.net; Website: http://www.tiac.net/users/videoeye). A fun, informative mag that digs into the latest video releases, from studio swill to obscure gems. Good interviews, a slick package, and a fine taste for cinema history.

VIDEO JUNKIE MAGAZINE #2 (Thomas Simmons, P.O. Box 4051, Ventura, CA 93007; E-mail: vidjunki@isle.net; $5 plus $2 postage, or $25 for 4 issues). The sophomore issue of this terrific mag features articles on Tobe Hooper's spotty career and an interview with William Lustig. Plus loads of genre reviews, and a no-bullshit attitude.

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SHOCKING BLUE CINEMA!

VINTAGE 1960'S & 70'S EXPLOITATION-CINEMA

BUNNY YEAGER'S NUDE CAMERA 1963 C. Maria Stinger. Bunny Yeager photographs gorgeous glamour models in fun filled nudie cutie! D: Barry Mahon.

CARGO OF LOVE 1968 B/W. Evil "Lupo" sisters lure young maidens to white slave racket in sadistic thrill a minute New York roughie! By Anton Holden director of "Aroused".

CHRISTINE KEELER AFFAIR 1964 B/W. Yvonne Buckingham, John Drew Barrymore. Beautiful teen demimondaine scandalizes British jet set. Banned in England!

DOMINIQUE IN DAUGHTERS OF LESBOS 1969 B/W. This story deals freely with a secret society of lesbians and their mode of living, loving and castrating. D: Peter Woodcock.

MY BODY HUNGERS 1967 B/W. Black garter belt is the instrument of depraved lust and murder. D: Joe Sarno. Original jazz score by Stan Free.

I WANT YOU 1968 B/W. Chelee Films. Sleazy madam blackmails perverse clientele in brutal roughie. D: Sam S. Catah. Surf/funeral score by Luristan Inc.

ONCE UPON A BODY 1969 B/W. Chelee Films. Twisted roughie features callous lesbians, sadistic beatings, homosexuality, electrocution, frenzied orgies & psychedelic jazz score by Luristan Inc. D: Sam S. Catah

ONE NAKED NIGHT 1963 B/W. Audrey Campbell. NYC degenerates corrupt small town virgin. D: Al Viola Jazz score by Chet McIntyre.

FUEGO 1969 C. Voluptuous Isabel Sarli lusts for sex & suicide! Armando Bo's erotic masterpiece. (Argentina's Russ Meyer). Original score by Armando Bo & Humberto Ubriaco. Best copy available.

SECRETS OF THE NAZI CRIMINALS 1962 B/W. Penetrating analysis of Hitler's rise to power. Extensive background on Himmler, Goering, Hess, Goebbels & others. Exhaustive detail on their gigantic murder operation - complete with corpses, statistics & maps. Minerva Int. (Sweden) Narrated in English. a.k.a. MEIN KAMPH II

THE SEX CYCLE 1966 B/W. Janet, with her new power of domination leads men and women down a path of destruction. D: Joe Sarno.

1000 SHAPES OF FEMALE 1963 C. Audrey Campbell. Beatnik coffee house spoof with pretentious Greenwich Village artists. D: Barry Mahon.

SOME LIKE IT VIOLENT 1968 B/W. Big time sadistic pimp develops computerized prostitution racket. Barry Mahon's best! D: Kemal Horulu.

VIRGIN COWBOY 1975 C. Liz Renay. Bridgette Maier. Prostitute falls for virgin cowboy in violent sexploitation western. Cal Vista release.

TORTURED FEMALES 1965 B/W. Wildcat strippers in leopard skin lingerie whipped without mercy! Mitam's 1st release.

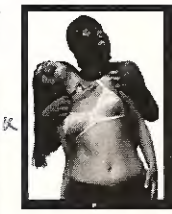
VINTAGE 1970's XXX CINEMA

AGONY OF LASH, LACE & LOVE 1975 C. Sadistic rubber freak tortures femme hostage!

ANAL ASSAULT 1970-75 C. Bridgette Maier. Documents brutal anal eroticism. Includes "*DEEP ARSE*", loops by Lasse Braun, *NAZI RAPISTS* & many more.

ANAL ULTRA VIXENS 1970's C. Linda McDowell, Vanessa Del Rio, Lisa Deleeuw, John Holmes. Collection of anal loops featuring SUPER BUSTY starlets!

ANGEL ON FIRE 1975 C. Despicable womanizer returns as ball busting female. D: Roberta Findlay.



THE CHEATERS 1973 C. Creep in ski mask rapes sleazy biker chick, while cycle gang disciplines busty mamas! Go go boots and bellbottoms galore!

CITY WOMEN 1972 C. Rene Bond. Come away with sensual city women as their passionate fantasies come to life.

CUMMING ATTRACTIONS 1970-75 C. USCHI DIGARD. Agony of Lash, Lace & Love. Prey of a Call Girl. Sensations. Mistress of Depravity. Violation of Claudia. Last Step Down. Dark Dreams. Too Young Too Care & 20 more 1st time on video XXX trailers.

THE DEVIL INSIDE HER 1976 C. ANNIE SPRINKLE endures heavy G/S humiliation in story of satanic mayhem. D: Zebedy Colt!

THE DOMINATORS 1970-74 C. Documents extreme S/M domination in *SWEET BITCH. WHITE-SLAVE. MASKED RAPISTS. SADIST ORGY. MISTRESS OF DARKNESS. KISS OF DEATH* & *MANY MORE.*

THE ELEVATOR 1972 C. Young & fresh CANDY SAMPLES devours everything in sight!

FORBIDDEN SEXUALITY 1970-75 C. Documents bizarre sexuality : Necrophilia, Nuns, Barbarism, Brute Force, Dangerous Strangers, Domination, Rape, Bloodletting, Hooks, Amputees, G/S & F/F. WARNING: Attacks your senses with brutal, shocking imagery!

HOUSE OF DE SADE 1975 C. Vanessa Del Rio. Seance happy swingers unleash the sadistic spirit of De Sade. Features extreme pain rituals and anal abuse. Pink Floyd soundtrack.

INCREDIBLE BODY SNATCHERS 1972 C. Hollywood drifters rape mother & virgin daughter in blood splattered color! D: Harry Hopper.

KITTY'S PLEASURE PALACE 1971 C. Girl traumatized by Nazi brutality assassinates rapist, serial killer and necrophile. Big budget special effects! D: Jack Genero.

HARDGORE 1973 C. The ULTIMATE big budget, BLOOD splattered hardcore roughie! Hospital death cult terrorize teenage Maria with Necrophilia, Meathooks, Castration, Lesbo Nurses, Deathdreams, Decapitation, Throat Slashings, Blood Orgies & more. Do not miss this film!

THE LUMBERJACKS 1971 C. Rednecks attack hippie and rape his woman. Hippie seeks vengeance!

MILLIE'S HOMECOMING 1972 C. Tina Russell. Dolly Sharpe. Petite maid pampers Lady Zazu & her freaky friends!

PERVERTED PASSION 1974 C. Sex degenerate murders Hollywood nobodies in black humored portrait of society's psycho trash running amok. Absolute classic! D: RAY DENNIS STECKLER using pseudonym Cindy Lou Sutters.

HISTORY OF RAPE 1970-75 C. Documents rape in XXX cinema. Includes *TERRORIZED VIRGIN*, Lasse Braun's *VIOLENCE* & more.

WARNING: Highly graphic images of unrelenting sexual brutality.

SAN FRANCISCO BALL 1971 C. Vicious rapists terrorize 3 beautiful women in vile, hate filled roughie. D: Jack Genero.

SATAN'S SEX SLAVES 1971 C. Satan hypnotizes sex starved hippies. "They traded one moment of ecstasy for an eternity of pain!"

SEX & THE SINGLE VAMPIRE 1970 C. Sandy Dempsey. John Holmes sinks his teeth into sex crazed swingers. ED WOOD style, spooky horror.

TERRI'S REVENGE 1975 C. Terri Hall. Radical New York women start W.A.R. (Women Against Rape), then take vengeance on male abusers. Rabid exploitation by Zebedy Colt!

WHAT ABOUT JANE 1971 C. Marsha Strawberry (Busty). Captivating, surreal portrait of a lonely housewife's search for sexual fulfillment. High budget, beautifully photographed. An Alpha Blue favorite.

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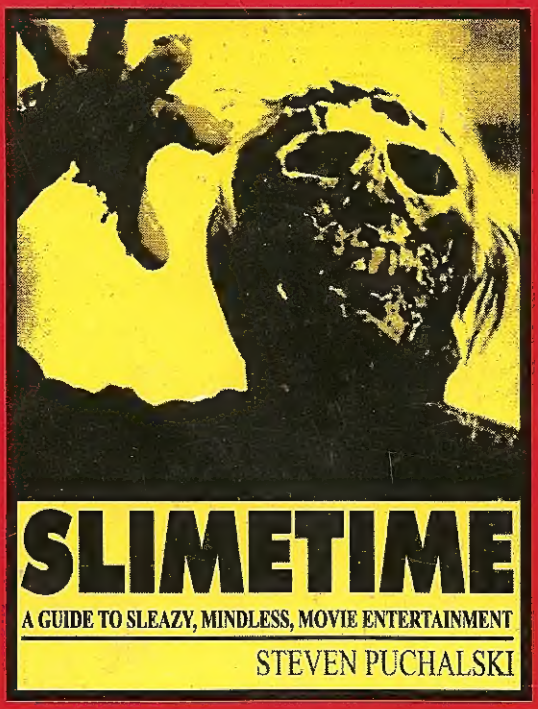

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by Steven Puchalski

with contributions by Brain J. Edwards, Tavis Riker and Steve Shapiro

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